LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

Upon its true and proper Grounds

ASSERTED & VINDICATED,

PROVING,

That no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel Men to any part of the Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline of the Gospel.

To which is added, The SECOND PART, *VIZ.*

Liberty of Conscience,

The Magistrates Interest;

OR,

To grant *Liberty of Conscience* to persons of *different persuasions* in matters of *Religion*, is the great Interest of all Kingdoms and States, and particularly of *England*; Asserted and proved.

By a PROTESTANT, a lover of Truth, and the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation.

The *Second Edition*, corrected by the Author, with some Addition.

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LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE upon its true and proper grounds Asserted and Vindicated.

AMongst all the endowments bestowed upon the sons of men, nothing is to have a higher price and value put upon it, than that we call *Conscience*; because of the immediate reference it hath to the pleasing or displeasing the great God, and those more noble Concerns of a better life; and also the irresistible Influence it hath upon our selves, to determine our well, or ill being here. Conscience is an ability in the understanding of man, by a reflect act to judge of himself in all he does, as to his acceptance, or rejection with God; this is the inward rule he hath to walk by: And 'tis but reasonable to believe mankind bound to steer their course, by what (upon the utmost improvement of their understandings) they know, and believe best. The proper seat of Conscience is in the understanding, and is no other thing, but this reflect act of our knowledge back upon our selves, dictating to us God's liking or disliking, what we do, as good or evil. This ability is more or less, according to the sutable light God affords to our understanding, either inwardly or outwardly, whether natural or divine; and is indeed to each man, the Rule of all other Rules God is pleased to govern him by: for whether it be by natural light or divine revelation, still the utmost bounds of his conformity lies in the knowledge and conception he hath of it, and of his duty in reference unto it. So that the information of the understanding, is still the guide of the Conscience; for when we become once convinced that this or that is God's will, my understanding reflects back to my self, and tells me, this is my duty in reference to it, and so comes in upon each man the obligation of that we call *Conscience*; which is indeed so unavoidable a reflection, sutable to the conviction and impression the understanding lies under, that no man hath power in himself, if he would, to escape it; *Conscientiam non esse judicium theoreticum, quo verum à falso simpliciter discernitur, sed practicum, quo particulariter illa cognitio*

applicatur ab homine ad illud, quod ipsi vel bonum, vel malum est, ut sit interna Regula, dirigens voluntatem: Amesi. de cas. Consci. That there was at the first in *Adam* a clear and perfect knowledge of God, and of himself, is not to be doubted, and that there was this reflect act in *Adams* knowledge, that he fully viewed and beheld himself, and knew in what a happy estate God had made him, is also clear; and that this exercise of his knowledge also, in a way of Conscience, he had to tell him, he was accepted of God, and did well in whatsoever he did; but that equal reflection of mans understanding, both towards good and evil, allowing the one and condemning the other, was first introduced, when he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which was so called by anticipation, because by the sin committed in eating of it, *Adam* who knew nothing before, neither in himself, nor any other creature, but what was perfectly good, came to the miserable knowledge of good and evil. Evil before he could not know, for till he had sinned, there could be no such thing presented to his view; but in that act of his sinning, he saw the greatest evil, and the root of all other evil; what was good also, by his fall he came to know in another manner, than before; for before he knew it only simply considered in it self, but now as it stood in a direct contrariety and opposition unto evil. That perfect knowledge man had at the first, so far retains, since the fall, its excellent nature, as to be a distinguisher between good and evil, and a constant witness for God in his soul, and by secret reference, to what he was at first, tells him, what he still ought to be: And this is the thing we call *Conscience*, which as it is the best thing left in man by far, since the fall, so 'tis the noblest and worthiest thing, the world hath left in it, and which above all others, ought to be cherished and valued; as that whereby God is most acknowledged, each man in his own breast most quieted and setled, and mankind best enabled to live peaceably in society and converse together.

That it hath continued amongst men ever since the fall, is plain, if we consider, that even in the darkest times of divine knowledge, before any Law from God was written, this knowledge men had of themselves, in reference to God, was a Law unto them. Their natural light, derived to them from their first creation, dictating to them what they ought to do, and what not, and enabling them to pass a judgement upon themselves, of their due behaviour towards God; and this the Apostle in the Epistle to the *Romans* calls *Conscience*, which will either excuse them, or accuse them in the great Judgment-day, when the secrets of mens hearts shall be made known. There be since mans fall two things eminently left in him; A sence and knowledge of God, though remote,

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and that two wayes: first by Instinct in his very composition and constitution, God making him at first in his owne Image; and secondly, by the use of his reason, in beholding the works of creation and providence, which he does daily behold, and converse with, and which do eminently preach God unto him; the other thing is a sense of pleasing or displeasing God, by doing what his understanding tells him is good, or ill, and this is to each man a Law; so *Paul* in that place of the *Romans* tells us, *that those that have not the Law written, are a Law unto themselves, and do by nature the things contained in the Law.*

When afterwards men came to be under a Law written, and the knowledge of Gods mind concerning man was more clearly revealed, every man came to have a larger view of his duty, and clearer reflection upon himself in reference to it, and so came to have a more enlightened Conscience, sutable to the enlargedness of his understanding in his walking before God.

This then being premised, that mans perfect knowledge which he had at first, does still retain a taste of, and is a discerning principle between good and evil, and does enable a man to judge of himself, in reference to his pleasing or displeasing of God, by the one and the other; and that every man hath more or less in him of that we call Conscience; (unless in some particular cases, whereby often endeavouring to resist and oppose Conscience, God in just judgement takes away the use of it) and that Conscience is wholy regulated by the understanding, and the light thereof.

We will consider, first, That men do, and alwayes have differed in their understandings and apprehensions, and so in their Consciences, about divine things, and their duty to God. Secondly, what the grounds and reasons are, upon which men come to differ; and thirdly, how far men are to be tolerated, and indulged one by another, in such variety and difference of knowledge and Conscience. For the first, we shall find it too obviously plain, so to have been in all times; A man must have some ill will, either to himself or his Reader, that should spend much time in the proof of it. If we look into those early times, before any Law was written, though all men had one common instinct of God in their nature and being, and had the same outward *Mediums* of the knowledge of God, which were the works of Creation and Providence, for there is no peace where their Voice sounded not; yet doubtless the various Apprehensions of God, and of mans duty to him, were very great; some improving those common Rudiments of Divinity, to more reverent thoughts of a Deity, and a more sober virtuous way of living, by their natural light; and others so far degenerating from

from them, as that when they knew God, and might have known more of him, they glorified him not as God, but turned the glory of the true and incorruptible God, into mock-Deities of Birds and Beasts, and so came to be given up to all manner of Evil. Such who lived in those dayes, and were by dreams, visions, voices, and otherwise, particularly enlightned, had other kind of apprehensions of God, and principles of Conscience sutable thereunto; which yet could reach no further, than themselves, nor be obliging to others, farther than they could justifie those divine discoveries in their own nature, or by the credit of their own testimony gain belief, and perswade men thereunto. When afterwards the Law came to be written in stone, which was from the beginning written in the heart, and was in truth no other than a transcript of the Law of Nature, and the Light thereof; yet what great variety do we find in the exposition of it, and what various principles derived from it; he is a great stranger to all Rabbinical Learning who knows not the wide compass of the Jewish Debates and Controversies. And since the times of the largest and fullest Revelation of the mind and will of God, in the dayes of the Gospel, do we not see, that Knowledge hath multiplied Division? What great variety of thoughts have arisen amongst men, not only concerning those more obscure Notions of the Order and Discipline of the Gospel-Church, but of most of the other Doctrines and Truths of Religion? And so general have the misapprehensions been, that have possessed men in these things, that sometimes we find in the Christian Church, Truth shut up, and thrust into a very narrow corner; and sometimes an *Athanasius*, and some very few opposing the torrent of mistakes, with which the generality of Christian understandings were possessed. And still the variety of mens Apprehensions have produced the same variety in several sorts of Consciences, & the effects of it. If we seriously ponder the reasons of these things, we shall find them to come under several heads, in the viewing of which we may arrive at some satisfaction, in the second thing proposed, which is to know how such uneven, disproportionate thoughts, Opinions and Consciences, comes to be amongst men.

The first and great account that may be given of it, is this; An innate infirmity in the soul of man since his fall, not to be able alwayes to make a right judgement of things, but to receive various impressions in the understanding-faculty (by reason of the infirmity and imperfection of it) according to all the several accidents, and circumstances relating to its information, and the object 'tis conversant about. *Adam* in his naming the Creatures, and what else he did before the fall, was not capable of a mistake: But man since lies very open to all delusion and deceit,

deceit, being not able always to represent to himself in his understanding-faculty, all those things that should be known to make up a perfect judgment, nor if he could do so, were he able by the intrinsick strength of that faculty, perfectly and infallibly to judge, of what should evidently appear before him; nor lastly, to remain fixed in any determination, being not only subject to alter and change, by seeing farther, and having more presented to his view then what he at the first knew, but also in his own nature now, become mutable and apt to change, in his best and truest resolves. And from such a womb of infirmity, 'tis not hard to conceive, what various and differing thoughts may be born.

Secondly, The great variety there is of suteable means, to operate upon such a weakness in the Soul, and to prevail over the infirmity of mens understanding, to lead them in several paths. This we shall easily find, if we consider the several postures and conditions mankind is setled in, as to Education, Company, Studies, and many such accidental matters, by which the minds of men are variously seasoned and engaged in their apprehensions; and so come to have differing foundations laid of Conscience, according to impressions received thereby. And where (as in most it is) very weak and ordinary motives prevail, and no larger compass is taken to settle the judgment, than those accidental means, that first prevail with us, yet as positive an obligation of Conscience ariseth from such things, as from any whatsoever; there can be no perswasion so impotent, but may meet with some capacities, over which it may easily have dominion, and the bounds of such mens knowledge, though never so mean, must needs be a rule to the Conscience; so that to imagine all mens minds and consciences should be the same, is to imagine all men to be Educated alike, all Company to talk alike, and all Books to be written alike; and that all other things, that work upon the minds of men, should all concenter to inculcate the same thing.

Thirdly, Besides all this, there is an inbred disposition in the souls of men, according to the bodies they dwell in, to apprehend and believe diversly of things, without any other outward help to such a variety; some men being naturally prone to believe some things, and others to imbibe those of a contrary nature; and this is to be found without much difficulty, in the several constitutions and composures of men, where we shall find their thoughts and opinions, holding great correspondence with, and bearing much proportion to, their natural inclinations and tempers, and at several times several thoughts prevailing, according as the concommitant Humours of Nature are predominant in them: so that let a man but philosophically view over the divers humors in mens bodies, such as make men cholerick, flegmatick, or the like, and

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the wonderful mixture of those humours, in the various Temperament of them; and he will not be much to seek, for the various thoughts, Opinions, and Consciences, that are in the world; and to force men out of these, through any door than that of the understanding, and means suited thereunto, is to force them out of their very nature and existence; that soul in man, that was at first Lord over the body, and could receive no sophistication from it, takes now a great tincture from thence, and savours much in all its operations, of the vessel 'tis kept in.

Lastly, let us seriously ponder the wounderful variety there is in that inward divine illumination, afforded to men more or less, as God pleaseth, by which their judgments, and consciences are in several measures settled and determined; As nothing can give us a clearer account of that variety there is in the world, in divine things; so nothing can be more prevailing upon us, to have compassion upon men severally informed and perswaded, than when we consider, God affordeth divine light severally to them, as he pleaseth, and gives it in what proportion, little or much, seems best to his Wisdom; and by making men of several growths and statures in divine knowledge, does seem to let us know, he would have men of several sizes and attainments in that kind, to live quietly together in the world.

These things being able in some measure to discover to us the grounds of those disagreeing principles we find amongst men; we will go on to the third and chief thing we have in pursuit by this discourse, which is a serious enquiry, How far men are to be tolerated one by another, whose judgments and consciences about divine things are found to differ: Conscience in it self considered, (being nothing else but the understanding under such a kind of exercise, as is before described) is such a thing, as can by no means come under any possibility of force or restraint, beyond its own bounds; and is as much out of the reach of all humane power, as the soul it self is, and therefore is chosen of God to be the witness, which he gives to himself amongst the sons of men, of their due behaviour towards him, and is a thing neither in the power of others, nor in the man himself; no man can point out what another shall believe, nor can he choose out his own belief, but still the understanding gives in its testimony by the conscience, though in actings the will may sometimes prevail against it. This is that which cheifly differs a man, as to his relativeness to God from other creatures, and is that whereby God keeps up his solemn claim of Soveraignty over us, in our own breasts, by such means as we can no way oppose, nor avoyd. This dominion of God was never delegated to any substitute upon earth, nor was there since the world began a

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judgement intrusted in any hands over the Consciences of men, nor was it indeed under a possibility to be; since no man, nor men, with the existence of humane power, could ever come to know the state of another mans Conscience, nor the manifold Circumstances (only open to a divine eye) relating to it; and therefore does *Paul* himself to the *Corinthians*, wholly disclaim the exercise of such a power.

The simple actings therefore of Conscience abstractedly considered, are not capable of a forceable impression from without; nor need any man fear the loss of liberty of Conscience in that sense of it, not reckon himself under an obligation to any indulgence for it, since a donation of it from any, will with no more reality afford it to me, than a restraint from them will any way actually take it from me. That which will (as most proper and genuine to the present enquiry proposed) come under consideration, will be, how far the products and effects of Conscience, in mens actings in pursuance of it, are to be indulged, and how far restrained; and this will all come under two heads: first, How far men are to be suffered to do, or not to do, those things, which they say they are in conscience obliged to do. 2dly, How far men are to be urged by commands to do such things, which they say they are in conscience obliged not to do. That a punctual clear Answer to these Questions, will be a travel of great peril undertaken, none that have any way versed themselves in such Controversies will deny, and therefore the better to secure our progress herein, it will be necessary chiefly and principally to reflect upon the Magistrate, and the Power he is intrusted withal; this method will carry its own evidence sufficiently with it: If we consider the power that mankind hath over each other, is exercised by him, and that the success of this notion, and the influence both of freedom and restraint depends solely upon him, and that the power of Princes and Magistrates do actually bind and loose in matters of this nature; I say, if we consider this, we shall soon make a discovery, that (finding out what the Magistrate may do, and what he may not do in Religious affairs) will give us a determination of this matter. In the prosecution of this, these several things shall be attempted; first, to make it evident, that Magistracy is an Institution grounded upon the Light of Nature, and how far he may and ought to proceed by that both negatively and positively in these things. Secondly, that a Magistrate by becoming Christian, receives no addition of power to what he had before, onely stands bound to an improved exercise of his power, surable to the light he then receives. Thirdly, to discover some eminent mistaken extreams about the Magistrates power in Religion, which have miserably involved us. And lastly, to shew how far the Magistrate under the

Gospel should, and ought to act about Religion, and wherein he is not to interpose his power, the right stating whereof, is the true and solid foundation, upon which all true *Liberty of Conscience* is built.

For the first of these, that Magistracy and Government is an institution grounded upon the Light of Nature, is easie enough to be made appear, the first rise of it being in Families, where it was wholly natural and paternal; and therefore it is that the first Commandment, wherein all subjection to Superiours is commanded, is comprehended under the obedience of Children, required to their Parents, that being the first Magistratical Power exercised; That first Power and Authority God gave *Adam*, upon the fall, over the Woman, being a distinguishing Power between the two sexes, and not properly any Magistratical Power relating to a Community. After these came to be several divided Families in the world, they found a necessity of a power, that might have a larger and farther extent, than that in each Family; which could be no otherwise grounded, than by a joynt and common consent, God having not by particular designation appointed any to rule over the world; and no one Family could claim a right to rule over another, nor could the first born in any family exercise any power, or extend his dominion farther, than that particular family: the reason whereof seems plain, because that parternal power, which is originally in a family, is not successive; there is no succession of that power Parents have over their Children, and Masters have over their Servants, (which is the ground of family-government) farther than those relations still reach; Hence it is the power a Parent might exercise in his Family, as a Father and a Master, he cannot exercise upon any of his kindred, or other collateral Relations in any degree further, and therefore that kind of Dominion must needs rest circumscribed within the bounds of each particular Family; and that more extensive Government of many Families together, was by a joynt-coalition and agreement of them, dictated by the Light of Nature for general good; there being scarce any thing a more necessary direction of Nature for mans own preservation and good, since his fall, than to associate himself in a Community under one Common-Government. How the Light of Nature did at the first operate upon men, to convince them of a necessity to joyn together in a subjection to Superiours, and how greatly their interest lay in such a subjection, relative to such a publick Dominion, we may somewhat discover, if we consider, First, That the Earth was at the first the gift of the great Creator, to the sons of *Adam*, and what every man first possessed was his own, and whatever he could by his labour produce from it; (the same Law that is to this day, to the first discoverers of

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any unpossessed part of the World:) now the only way to preserve men in such a Propriety, and to make good that first Law of Gods donation, was to have by common consent a publick power to take care of it, and restrain the violence and exorbitant injustice, that would otherwise have filled the world.

Secondly, When private differences came to arise between man and man, between cause and cause, it would prove impossible to end any strife, while each man would be a Judge in his own cafe, and therefore it was found impracticable for men to live without a third Judgment, which did necessarily point them to a Magistrate.

Thirdly, Man was not only a sociable creature in himself, made to live in society, and prompted by particular inclination to it, but each man came to see, men had common Concerns one with another, and Interests of a publick nature, beyond the bounds of their own particular families; and there could be no way found out to capacitate them, to enjoy those common advantages they might afford each to other, but by imbodying themselves together, and creating a publick Relation each to other in one joynt-society, the very being of which must necessarily lye in having one to rule over it, and to exercise that publick care, requisite to its preservation, to which no mans private power or concern either could or ought to lead him.

Lastly, The sensible good each Family found in that Paternal Regiment exercised within it self, might well induce them to fall into that more general; and to unite themselves under one Political Father, in whose care and protection they might live secured.

These and many other necessary inforcements upon the common sense and experience of men, induced the power of commanding, and the reason of obeying. That God, that afforded to each creature a capacity large enough for its own preservation, did not leave Man without sufficient light to discover this great Engine of his safety and happiness. Well may we then look upon the power of Magistracy, as the greatest and most transcendant of all humane things, and pay the due tribute of all Reverence and Obedience to it, as being the Sovereign Power of God, exercised in a way of Vicegerency amongst men, and that wherein the peace and quiet of mankind is most necessarily included.

The Law and Light of Nature, having thus from the beginning placed the Magistrate in his Throne, the same also did lead and guide him to the exercise of his Power, by bringing him under this obligation, to do whatsoever should be found necessary to the good of mankind, both in their private and publick capacity, and restrain whatso-

ever is destructive to it; this as it brings Princes and Magistrates to a tye of duty, so is the donation of this Power exceeding large and ample: The first thing in which the power of the Magistrate is naturally exerted, is in his own preservation, wherein his Power is *Paramount* to all pretensions whatsoever; As in Nature each mans supream Law lies in self-preservation, who is bid to love his Neighbour but as himself; So politically in Magistracy the preservation of it self in its Power and Prerogative, and the exercises thereof, is the first thing 'tis led to look after; he is to preserve himself in order to that preservation he is to afford to others. 'Twere very absurd to suppose a Magistrate bound to tolerate any thing destructive to his being, no pretence of Conscience is here to be suffered, 'tis a practice against the Law of Nature, 'tis to pretend Conscience to annihilate mankind; God hath not, nor will not promulge Laws to interfere one with another, nor will he ever reveal any thing against the standing Law of Nature [it being the remains of mans excellent creation at first] but what shall heighten and improve it to a further perfection. Herein therefore Princes and States are sufficiently secured by a power inherent in their very being, that no abused pretensions of a liberty for Conscience can ever invade or disturb them.

Secondly, The extent of the Magistrates power reacheth to a total suppression of all moral evil, and encourgement of all moral good; and that for these Reasons: First, moral evil is an abomination to every mans conscience, and therefore ought to be much more so to the Magistrate, who hath the only power of suppressing and punishing it: Secondly, moral evil and vice is most injurious to mankind, and destructive to that well-being and quiet the Magistrate is bound to provide for: Thirdly, It brings down sensible and visible Judgments upon persons and societies, with a voice easie enough to be heard by any natural ear, and therefore the Magistrate by the very Light of Nature, is loudly enough called upon to suppress it. This we have clear enough set down in the 13th of the *Romans*, where the Magistrate is said *to be a terrour to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well*; the Magistrates power is there fully asserted, but it seems to be but the same power he had before, his Commission seems only to be renewed with the same power he had from the beginning; that the Apostle there speaks nothing of the power of Magistrates, beyond what the light of Nature gives them, seems to be very clear in two things: First, in that he instanceth in the present *Roman* power that then was; and 2dly, because he sets down nothing that the Magistrate is to do, but what the Light and Law of Nature doth directly guide him unto; That the Apostle

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ſpeaks of Magiſtracy in general is plain, and that he ſpeaks of it in the preſent inſtance of the then *Roman* Power, is as plain; now if all that belongs to the Magiſtracy in the abſtract, had not bin compleat in the Roman power, as to the right of it, the inſtance had bin no way proportionate nor right. The Apoſtle writing to *Rome*, no doubt intended to declare the principles of the Goſpel to be ſuch, as taught all ſubjection to the Emperour; he ſays, *The Powers that be, are ordained of God*, ſpeaking in the preſent ſenſe of thoſe that then were, and he ſays, *For this cauſe pay you Tribute*; that is, the preſent Tax you pay the Roman Emperour is upon this very account; ſo that he carries on the inſtance of Magiſtracy all along in the Roman Heathen power. Secondly, he ſpeaks of nothing to be done by the Magiſtrate, but what the light of nature dictates, and what was the duty of the Emperour then to do; to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, and to encourage thoſe that do well; wherein he is a Miniſter of God to us for very much good. By this we ſee then, this farther power of reſtraint in the Magiſtrate, in his natural conſtitution, that being to ſuppreſs all moral evil, and encourage virtue, he is bound not to ſuffer, upon any falſe pretenſions of Conſcience whatſoever, any practices that diſcourage the one, or fall within the guilt of the other.

Theſe formentioned and unqueſtionable generals do contain in them the negative and poſitive execution of the Magiſtrates natural power, in things purely moral and political. How far he is by the Light of Nature obliged about the religious concerns of his Subjects, and wherein the Light of Nature layes an Arreſt upon him, not to proceed, that ſo the due liberty of each mans Conſcience may be ſecured, will come under a more pertinent conſideration, in a following part of this diſcourſe. We ſee by theſe things, the Magiſtrate negatively impowred in an ample manner in his firſt conſtitution, over all things relating to the moral and political good of mankind. The Light of Nature excludes all ſuch Principles from the leaſt toleration, which make men ceaſe to be true Subjects to the State, or good Commonwealths-men in relations to others: Liberty of Conſcience is beſt ſecured, by diſclaiming ſuch who neither by natural or divine Law, can make any juſt pretence to it; Tis only to be given in things divine and ſupernatural, ſuch as neither deſtroy nor diſturb the civil and political intereſts and rights of men.

The ſecond thing propoſed about the *Magiſtrate*, will have no hardſhip to make appear; That a *Magiſtrate* by becoming *Chriſtian* hath no addition of power to what he had before; *Magiſtracy* is the ſame, and as legitimated amongſt *Heathens*, as *Chriſtians*. A Magiſtrate, when

when *Christian*, exercises the power he had before otherwise, but receives no addition of power to his office; Christ in the Gospel hath made no alteration in *Magistratical Power*, nor hath he given any addition to it, when exercised by *Christian hands*; but a Magistrate when *Christian*, is bound to exert his Power in a way sutable to the light he then hath: He that hath no other then the Light of Nature, hath as much power about Religion, as if he were *Christian*, and is to take as much care of the souls of his Subjects, sutable to that Light, as any Christian Magistrate is to do, sutable to his. The power a Parent hath over his Child, a Master over his Servant, a Prince over his Subjects, is no more when they become Christian, than it was before, only that power must be otherwise exercised, according to that improvement of light Christianity brings with it. All natural and moral Power was the same from the beginning, though God was not pleased to set that power distinctly down, in a Law written, till long after, the Light of Nature gave a plentiful information about these things. The duty of all such Relations, in the performance mutually of them amongst men, is greatly furthered by the Light of the Gospel, but the duty is still the same: Several things do evidently evince this general truth.

First, All natural and morall relations, belong to men as men, only so considered, and not as Christians, and are fully compleat and perfect amongst mankind, both in the power of the one, and the duty of the other, without any reference to any perswasion in Religion, or other qualification whatever.

Secondly, It appears from hence; because whatsoever the Gospel reveals to be the duty of such relations each to other, we find practised by the Light and Law of Nature, from the beginning; these things being of absolute necessity to uphold the frame and policy of mankind, God had naturally endowed them with a sufficient discovery of his mind about them.

Thirdly, It appears to be so; because Christians are obliged by the Laws of the Gospel, to give the same obedience, and perform the same duties, in these relations to unbeleivers, that they are to Beleivers; the Gospel speaks of these things without distinction; Subjects are commanded to obey Heathen Magistrates in all things lawful, [and we are to obey Christian no farther;] Servants are commanded, with the utmost duty of Servants, to obey unbelieving Masters; and so Wives to be subject to unbelieving Husbands; all which declares these relations perfectly inherent in mankind, as such, and no way relative to any other qualification whatsoever.

These two preliminary considerations of the Magistrate; First, that he

he has his Original in the Light and Law of Nature; Secondly, That his power and being is thereby perfect and compleat, and that Christianity gives no addition of power to such an office, will much farther the right stating the chief and last thing proposed, How far a Christian Magistrate under the Gospel is impowred Negatively and Positively in these things. Before I proceed to which, I shall come to the third thing intended, which is to shew, how some eminent mistakes about the *Magistrates Power in Religious things*, have involved us into very destructive and pernicious extremities; a Prospect of which may be had in these three things, into which the various Writings and Discourses of that Subject, have chiefly issued themselves: First, Some do make the *Magistrate* the sole Judge of all *Spiritual matters*, ascribe to him the power of setling what *Government* he pleases in the *Church*, appointing Officers in it, determining all differences in Religious things, suppressing by his Power all Errors and Heresies, and superseding all matters that appertain to the Gospel. A second sort, with an equal warmth, affirm the *Magistrates Power in Religious things*, but say; *'Tis never to be exercised but in a perfect subserviency to the Church, and that whatsoever the Church determines, he is bound to execute by the Temporal Sword, as the great Law of Christ.* A third sort, as wide of the Truth as either of the other, say positively, *The Magistrate hath nothing at all to do in Religious Concerns, that he is a meer Civil-Officer, to take care of mens Civil-Interests, and hath nothing to do with things of a Spiritual nature.*

That all these Principles have produced hurtful effects, and that the Truth lies distant from them all, will be found in a distinct Consideration of them. The first does little less than revive in the *Magistrate* now, much of that power *Christ* himself, and the *Apostles* by his delegation, exercised at first, in setling the Gospel-Church; and unless it can be punctually made appear, where in the Gospel *Christ* hath substituted the *Magistrate* to exercise such a dominion over his House, it will soberly be found a dangerous Intrenchment upon his Kingly Office; 'tis one thing to take care of the execution of what *Christ* hath already setled, and another to make Laws and Customs about those things: This opinion, as it is by many late Writers maintained, dissolves all Ecclesiastical Regiment, and annexeth the Government of the Church to the Civil power; or indeed, drowns the Church into the State, or at least mixes them, as much or more than they were mixed together under the Judaical policy. What ever government the *Magistrate* settles, cannot be Ecclesiastical but Civil, if it be forreign to what is already divinely appointed; if it be not, then its not the setling, but the executing of what is already setled, unless you will say, that *Christ* entrusted

him

him to settle the Ecclesiastical Government of his Church, and that will seem not a little strange, that the Magistrate, who is no Spiritual Officer set in the Church, nor cannot himself administer in executing the least thing within it, should have such a Supream Power over it. Either Christ and the Apostles did settle a Government in the Church, or they did not; if they did, the Magistrate, as well as others, is obliged by it; if they did not, but that 'tis left to the Magistrate, he has a greater power, at least in the exercise of it, then ever they had. For if we suppose, they had power to settle a Government, but did not think fit to exert that power, but left it to the Magistrate, his power in the execution of it is greater than theirs. 'Tis much, that the infallible Wisdom of Christ and his Apostles, could not better find out an Order for the Gospel-Church, than to leave it to the mercy of every Magistrates discretion; and 'tis equally to be wondred at, That an Officer of such necessary importance to the Church, as to settle the Government of it, should be wanting when the Gospel was first planted, and every thing ordinary and extraordinary belonging to it, was presented to accompany the Glorious Presence of Christ upon Earth, and which might any way contribute to rear up the Fabrick of the New Testament-Church. 'Tis much that such an Officer of so absolute concernment, as this Opinion makes him, should not be in the Christian World for three hundred years together. If we will seek the meaning of this providential disposal of things; may we not soberly think it to be, that the Gospel was a thing wholly founded upon Spiritual Power, was compleat therein, and needed not any Temporal power to contribute to its perfection?

This impowering the Magistrate with a Superlative Authority, in setling what relates to the Government of the Church, supposeth this, That the Scripture hath revealed no Truth that is binding in this matter, but this, That what the Magistrate pleaseth to settle in every place, that is right, [and this I am sure the Scripture hath no where revealed] and so we are like to have as many distinct Governments, as there are States and Kingdoms distinct in the World; 'tis strange, those that are for exact Uniformity in any one Church, should lay a foundation of such confused multiplicity in the Church Universal.

Either we must suppose, Christ was not faithful to reveal all that concerned the Government of the Gospel-Church, which God intrusted him with, or else that it was the Will of God there should be no more revealed, but that all should be transiently left to the Magistrate. To say the first, were but to urge Blasphemy for Reason; if the second, 'tis to impower an Officer in such a necessary and weighty matter, whose very

very being in the *Church*, with an ability to do it, had a futurity of three hundred years to come. During all which time, if Christ and the Apostles setled no Government in the Church, and there being no Christian *Magistrate* that could settle any; How could the Church then come lawfully to have any? If it be said, Where there is no Christian Magistrate, every Church may use their own discretion; then 'tis plain, the Government of the Church under the Gospel, hath no other bottom, than what every *Magistrate*, and every particular Church pleaseth; and so not onely *Magistrates*, but *Churches*, and indeed all the World may be their own Carvers in this weighty matter; 'Tis very hard to be credited, that the Government of the Church, which does so greatly relate to the preservation of the Truth of Doctrine in it, should be left to such floating uncertainties.

Besides, this Position makes all that part of the Gospel, which lies in Precept and President about the Rule of the Church, and what was by the Apostles then practised and commanded, to be of no use to us, nor obligation upon us, farther then the Magistrate pleaseth; 'tis to give him a dominion over that part of the Scriptures, and opens a door to make him (as some have fully done) Lord over the whole New-Testament.

Two things are usually said to prop up this Power in the Magistrate.

First, That there is nothing positively determined in the Gospel about these things; because the Gospel being to take place throughout the whole world, no one frame or Model of Government could be composed, that would conveniently fit all persons and places where the Gospel might come to be received and setled; and therefore the Wisdom of Christ hath left things of that nature wholly undetermined.

This is a thing taken for granted, and wholly without any Divine Ground to warrant it, and is in the reason of the thing it self insufficient; for we find nothing in command or practise by the Apostles in setling the Christian Churches, but what will agree with any Nation or People in the World. He that will say, That the Order of the Gospel, as we there find it practised and required, will not agree to any place; may with as much reason, if not more, say, That the receiving of the Gospel it self, in the general belief of it, will not agree to that place.

These things make it evident, that the Order and Discipline we find setled in the Gospel-Churches, in the Apostles time, must needs fit every place and people, and can do no hurt any where. First, It highly tends to heighten and compleat the duty incumbent on all Moral and Natural Relations; that which Christ hath appointed to preserve order

among Christians as Christians, will never hinder, but farther it amongst men as men. Secondly, The power upon which Christs Rule, setled in his Church, is founded, is wholly Spiritual, it can never do any violence to mankind, nor clash with any humane power, because that is the Boundery of it. Thirdly, The thing designed and attained by the Order of the Gospel-Church, is no more than to preserve men in a regular capacity to enjoy all Christs Institutions; and therefore he that will say, This Order will not suit any Nation, must say in effect, None of Christs Institutions will agree to that Nation. Fourthly, There is nothing in Christs Government of his Church, that is properly relative to the Political Government of a State, or does any way determine the form of it, but it may be equally exercised under any Government whatsoever. The Religious policy of the Jews did highly relate to the State, and was commixed with it, and the same Government of that Church could not have been had without a suitable conformity of the State to it, and so could not well reach beyond that Nation, and peculiar Country and People. But the Gospel-Church, and the Rule of it, is grounded upon quite other terms, and hath its first Principle in that saying of our Saviour, *Where ever two or three are met together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them*; And there is no place, nor people under the Sun, but where, with much advantage, the order of the Gospel, as well as the Gospel it self, may be introduced.

A second thing made to prop up this power in the Magistrate, is, Because of the wonderful difficulty we find in the New-Testament about matters of this nature. This I acknowledge should put us upon much enquiry, and great indulgence to each other, but I cannot yeeld it a good reason to establish a visible Judge to settle a Civil Pope; for at last upon the same grounds it will be found out, that the Scripture in Doctrinals is obscure too, and so the Magistrate must be likewise an Umpire in those things, and finally in all. Were once all these Carnal Interests, and Political Concerns that are now twisted into the Government of the Church, laid by, it would be found a thing very feasible to deduce from Scripture Precept and Example, (limited to no particular case in the reason of it) a systeme of Ecclesiastical Rules sufficient for the obtaining all the holy and good ends designed by the Gospel, and compleating men in a Spiritual Society, as an Organical-Church; and if a Church can be so constituted (which is a thing in it self of no hardship, if men would be contented with the simplicity of the Gospel, and Christs wisdom in these things) as that Church will be most pure, as having nothing of humane make in it, so it will perfectly annihilate all those pretended necessities for the interposition of humane Authority about such things.

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If the *Magistrate* have likewise a farther power to suppress all Errors and Heresies, and to establish by force the Orthodox Truth (the Rule of which must needs be what he thinks to be so) this will inevitably follow, that there can be never any such thing, as *Liberty of Conscience* in any case, or upon any terms in the world, under a *Christian Magistrate*, he sins if he suffer to tolerate any thing but what he thinks punctually right.

If he be the proper Judge entrusted, first to judge, and then to execute his Judgment with the Temporal Power; all Liberty, to whosoever is not of his mind, is perfectly gone: This is no other than to make the Magistrate's Power a meer *Inquisition*; And by this means a Christian Magistrate will prove a *marvellous hurt* to much of the Church where he governs; for, unless you will suppose all the Truth, and all sound Christians to be included in what he establishes for Orthodox; if there be any Truth, or true Professors of Christianity amongst all the other Opinions he persecutes, they are sure to be sufferers, and it will ever fall out, that all those that are not of the Magistrates Opinion, had better live under one of *Gallio's* temper, than under a Magistrate so practising

These large positions about the Magistrates Power, have no visible ground for themselves in the Gospel; and when 'tis said, the reason of it is, because there was no Christian *Magistrate* till long after, and so little mention is made of his Authority in these things, there is nothing said that can be any way satisfactory; because what power soever any shall exercise in or over the Gospel-Church to the end of the world, must have its rise and derivation from what was then established by Christ and his Apostles. However they are sure of a popular acceptance:

First, Because they bring us to a visible Judge, and a humane certainty, which most men had rather be at, than a laborious enquiry after divine Truth, in the way God hath reavealed it in the Scriptures.

And secondly, Because they are positions, that land us in a very safe harbour, and free us from any danger of suffering about those things; he that thinks it his duty to be always of the *Magistrates* Religion, is so secured in that duty, that no Religion can possibly ever hurt him; and who ever thinks the *Magistrate* is Gods substitute, to determine all matters of Religion, as he pleaseth, must needs think it a duty to be of his mind.

The second Extream about the *Magistrates* Power, is in asserting the *Magistrate* to have ample concerns about Religion, and a power

ſufficient entruſted to him; but the manner in which it is to be exerciſed, is in a punctual ſubſerviency to the Church; that is, they are to determine, and he is to execute; they are to be his eye, and he is to be their hand: As the firſt Extream debaſeth the Church, and all Eccleſiaſtical power under the Magiſtrates feet, and makes him the ſole Lord of all; ſo this in another extream makes the Magiſtrate a Slave to the Church: this is an unreaſonable Impoſition upon him, and gives him leſs liberty than each private Chriſtian ought to have, to oblige him to put a civil Sanction, and execute by his Authority, whatever the Church decrees, whether he judge it to be right or no; this is only to make him a Sword-bearer to the Clergy: This is the great Engine, by which the Church of *Rome* has inſlaved ſo much of the World; Anti-chriſt could never have been ſetled in his throne, if Kingdoms had not thus given up their power to him. How ſhamefully upon this pretence, that the Civil power muſt be ſubject to the Eccleſiaſtical, have the *Popes* of *Rome* brought Kings and Emperours, not only to employ their power as they pleaſed, but to ſuffer all the ſcorns and indignities from them imaginable? The ſtory of what *Hildebrand* did to the Emperour *Henry*, and many others, do abundantly ſhew this. The truth is, the carnal Conjunction of the Temporal Power with the Spiritual, is that which has made all Eccleſiaſtical Regiment odious and unſavoury in the noſtrils of the world in all Ages, and hath had no other effect, but to enable the *Clergy*, under a pretext of the power of the Goſpel, to trample (by the power of the World) mankind under their feet. That the Civil Magiſtrate ought not to employ his power in ſuch a ſub-ordination, let theſe things be conſidered:

Firſt, This is to ſuppoſe, either an inſufficiency in that Spiritual Power which Chriſt did at firſt leave in his Church, or elſe that he fails in that Promiſe of *being with them to the end of the world*, and continuing his Preſence, to make his Laws effectual for the end they are intended: Chriſt hath appointed the means of Converting men to the Goſpel, to be the preaching of it to them: If you will compel men by the Civil power to become Converts, it plainly intimates, we judge Chriſts way inſufficient, and uſe the other as what we judge a better. As Chriſt hath appointed Preaching the Goſpel, as the great means to bring men into the Church; ſo he hath appointed Excommunication, as the great means to caſt offenders out of the Church; and force is as unreaſonable in the one, as in the other. The outward advantages a man has by becoming a Chriſtian, lyes in the enjoyment of all Chriſts Inſtitutions; and the puniſhment of all Goſpel-crimes, lyes in being caſt out from thoſe priviledges, and undergoing the weight that Chriſt ſhall lay upon the

the Conscience thereby. When a person is excommunicated, to deliver him over to the Temporal power, to be corporally punished, must either be, because we think Christs punishment in that case, not enough; or else, because our own animosity prompts us to go farther. *Chrysostom Serm. de Anathem.* hath a pious and prudent saying, *Dogmata impia, & quæ ab Hereticis profecta sunt, arguere & Anathematizare oportet, hominibus autem parcendum, & pro salute eorum orandum*: that is, we must confute, and pronounce *Anathema* to the wicked opinions of *Heretick*s, but we must spare their Persons, and pray for their Salvation.

Secondly, This way alters the manner of Christs rule under the Gospel, which is in the Spirits and Consciences of men; 'Tis much of Christs glory to rule his Subjects under the Gospel, by a Spiritual power; 'tis that power makes a man a Christian; 'tis that power in all Gospel Institutions, that keeps men in their due obedience unto Christ, and 'tis that power carries the sting of the punishment, when men are cast out of the Church; 'tis indeed that power does all under the Gospel; and to bring in the Temporal Sword, is to make the weapons of the Gospel, not mighty through God, but mighty through the Magistrates power, and wholly to alter the nature of the Gospel, and all its Institutions; 'tis to arm the Church with Weapons Christ never gave her, and to make her a Military, rather than a Spiritual Society.

Thirdly, Suppose but this truth, That all Churches, even the purest, are in the execution of Christs Laws, fallible and lyable to mistake; this Doctrine hath a marvellous tendency to bring the Magistrate under great transgression, and each Christian under a possibility of such bondage, as the Gospel no where imposes on him: If a man be unjustly cast out of a Church, and the Magistrate proceeds against him, he executes an evil Sentence, and does it blindfold, being by this Doctrine an Officer no way competent, nor in any capacity to make a judgement of the truth, or error of it, and so cannot possibly escape a greater sin. A Christian unduly cast out of a Church, hath this security against such a proceeding, that Christ will never ratifie it upon his Conscience; but by this manner of execution, he is sure, whether the Sentence be right or no, to fall under as heavy an outward suffering, as the *Magistrates* Sword can inflict upon him. And by this means it will come to pass, that men shall be more dangerously concerned, in their lives and estates, by being in the Church, then by being Members of any Society whatsoever.

The Third Extream in this matter, lyes amongst those, who say, *That the Magistrate hath nothing at all to do about Religion*: This lyes very wide from truth, and cannot in such a general Position be made good; if

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we consider: First, that every man in the World, as he is a Creature, and a Subject to the great God, is bound in his station, and in Gods way, to promote his honour, and endeavour that his Will may be done in the World; it would be strange that the Magistrate, who is his chief Officer, should be no way concerned to see the Laws, which God gives the World, put in execution, by the Persons, and in the manner he hath appointed it; 'tis not to be imagined, that he that hath the complicated relation of a Christian, and a Magistrate to others, should have no care relative to their Spiritual good, 'twere to say the Magistrate must not do that which every man else in the World is bound to do.

Secondly, God never since the world began, trusted any with the care of mens bodies, but he entrusted them likewise with some care of their souls: If we look over all the Natural and Moral Relations in the world, such as Parents, Masters, Generals of Armies, we shall ever find it so: Men are to be ruled over as Creatures, that have immortal souls to be chiefly cared for; and they are to be ruled over as such who have a special relation to God, and a homage to pay him, above all the rest of the world: a rule over men without some respect to this, would denominate Mankind into Brutes.

Thirdly, To say the Magistrate hath nothing to do about Religion, is to deny what hath been practised by the Light of Nature before the Law, was practised under the Law suitable to that dispensation, and both commanded, and commended, and is to be practised under the Gospel, sutable to this dispensation, and is foretold as a blessing so to be, and in fact hath been so ever since there hath been a Magistrate Christian in the world.

Having thus considered these hurtful extreams about the Magistrates Power, the last thing to come under consideration, will be the due bounds of a Magistrates Power under the Gospel, that is, how far a Magistrate, being Christian, may improvedly exercise his natural power for the advantage and benefit of the Gospel, and wherein he stands bounded and obliged not to proceed; the preserving a right state whereof, through the torrent of these Extreams, will be of singular moment to the matter in hand.

We have seen that the power of a Heathen and a Christian *Magistrate* differs nothing at all in kind; a Heathen *Magistrate* hath the same right, and is bound to do as much in Religion as a Christian, only the one having more knowledge of God and his Mind, is bound improvedly to exercise his power accordingly: the first thing a Christian *Magistrate* stands bound to do for the good of Religion, is to afford the Churches

Churches all negative good; that is, to remove all Oppreſſion from them, and all things that do any way hinder them to enjoy the Inſtitutions of Chriſt; He is to give them reſt, that they may be edified, and walk in the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, and lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godlineſs and honeſty: This, as 'tis a ſpecial bleſſing the Church does not often enjoy, ſo 'tis one chief part of that benefit it receives by Chriſtian Rulers: And this the Light of Nature will eaſily guide a Magiſtrate to do for any Religion, of the truth of which he is perſwaded. In the Affirmative, he is not only to ſee that the Goſpel be preached, and all under him fully inſtructed in the truths thereof; to unite all Chriſtians, and as much as in him lyes, preſerve peace in the Church, to encourage thoſe, he finds moſt zealous, conſtant, and ſincere in the profeſſion of the Goſpel, and by his own example to lead forth his Subjects in all ſound Orthodox Profeſſion and Practice: But to comprehend all in one, He is to endeavour in a Goſpel-way, to ſee all the Laws of Chriſt put in execution, and as much as in him lyes, ſee his Will done in the World; he is ſo far from being bound to execute only what the Church will have him, that he is to over-ſee their proceedings, and to take care, as Chriſts chief Officer in the World, that all things in the Church be duly, and according to Chriſts appointment adminiſtred. The Apoſtles words are general and full, *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher Powers:* Whereſoever the higheſt power is, it muſt needs be ſo, unleſs you will have a higheſt, and a higheſt, which will breed inevitable confuſion; the Civil power bidding a man do one thing and the Eccleſiaſtical another, it hath ever in fact been ſo; but under the *Roman Church*, where the Emperours were made believe, that 'twas the higheſt piece of Religion, voluntarily to yield up their Power to the Church, and ſubmit to her direction for the uſe of it, which at firſt they confeſſed, was inherent in the Emperours, and not in the Church. Before the Law, not only the Power, but the Exerciſe of the Prieſthood it ſelf, naturally fell into the Magiſtrate: 'Twas ſo in *Noah*, in *Abraham*, and in *Melchiſedeck*, who was a King and a Prieſt. 'Twas ſo in *Moſes*, the Regal and Sacerdotal power were both in him, till they were by God divided between him and *Aaron*; ever ſince which time, the Exerciſes of *Magiſtracy* and *Miniſtry* have been, and are to be diſtinct. 'Twas ſo likewiſe amongſt the Heathens, *Homer* tells us of *Princes* and *Heroes*, that Sacrificed and performed the Worſhip to the Godds. In *Rome* 'twas manifeſtly ſo, the firſt *Roman* Kings did the like. Since *Magiſtracy* and *Miniſtry* has been diſtinctly exerciſed, ſtill the Inſpection and Regulation of Religion, and the Officers Eccleſiaſtical, have bin in the Magiſtrate. Under the Law 'twas plainly ſo. Under the Goſpel

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so soon as there was a *Christian Magistrate* that could exercise such a Power, we find it so. The right was the same in the *Heathen* powers (which happily was the ground of *Paul*'s Appeal unto *Cæsar*) though they could not then exercise it. There is nothing more plain, than that there may be a Right, where there is not an Ability to exercise it. *Constantine* and the *Christian Emperours* after him, till the *Church* of *Rome* had cheated them into subjection, took upon them the care and over-sight of all Religious things, and to see all Christs Laws executed. *Constantine* used to call himself, *The general Bishop*, to take care that all things were duly performed in the *Church*. Amongst our selves we reap the Advantage of our Kings and Princes Care, and Concern, in that enjoyment we have of the *Protestant Religion*. This shews the great weakness on the one hand, of such who say, *the Magistrate hath nothing to do with Religion*; and the perfect mistake of those on the other hand, who would have the *Magistrate wholly Subordinate to the Church*; and the third extream in those, who would place the *Magistrate in so supream a Power, as upon the matter, to do what he pleaseth*; will be sufficiently enervated, if we consider, That as the *Magistrate* is to see that executed, that *Christ* hath appointed in Religion; so he is to bring in nothing of his own, he is punctually tyed up, neither to add, nor diminish, neither in the matter, nor the manner; his business is to see Laws executed, not to make Laws, nor change Laws; *Christ* has no where granted any such Commission, either to the *Magistrate*, or any else upon earth; and therefore we come to a right state of the *Magistrates Power*, when we consider him as Gods chief Officer in the World, directed by the Light of Nature, as well as otherwise, to see that which God reveals to be his Will, put in execution; and that which comes particularly to the present matter in hand, *That he do it under the Gospel in the manner Christ hath appointed:* The manner *Christ* hath appointed being as positively obliging as the matter; and therefore the Temporal Sword, when 'tis used by *Magistrates* in the Concerns of the Gospel, is the *Dead Fly*, that corrupts all their otherwise very laudable endeavours. Nor need it seem strange, that a *Magistrate* should have the care and over-sight of that, wherein he is not to use the Temporal power; as he is to endeavour to see that done by others under the Gospel, (as the Administration of the Sacraments, and the like) which he is not to do in his own person; so he is to see that done by the Spiritual means *Christ* hath appointed for it, which he is by no means to force the doing of by the Temporal power. He that thinks the *Magistrate* cannot be useful to the *Church* without the Temporal power, may with as good reason say, That all other powers in the *Church* are useless, where there is not the Temporal Sword

to

to execute them. All Societies of men are under the Regulation of the higheſt power, but yet may act, and ought to do ſo, by diſtinct and proper wayes, and by means ſutable to each. A Colledge of Phyſitians in a State, are under the Regulament of the higheſt Power; and yet it were very abſurd to force them to give Phyſick, as a thing in it ſelf both unnatural and unreaſonable. The caſe is much more ſo in the *Church*, nor can any Inſtance fully reach it, becauſe the Church is a diſtinct thing of it ſelf, and hath powers proper and peculiar to it, in which it is ſo compleat, that it can ſubſiſt without the *Magiſtrate*, as it did in the *Primitive* times. The *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Power*, are things perfectly in themſelves diſtinct, and ought in their Exerciſe to be kept ſo. The higheſt Power governs men, as *men*, by the Temporal Sword, but, as *Chriſtians*, by the Spiritual, and by ſeeing all things done in Religion by thoſe Spiritual means Chriſt hath appointed; all which means he may make uſe of, though exerciſed by other hands than his own; and ſtill in a ſubordination to him, as *Chriſts* chief Officer in the World, who hath the charge incumbent upon him, to ſee all that *Chriſt* hath commanded duly put in execution: But the *Magiſtrate* himſelf, with the power proper to him, which is the Temporal, is not immediately to act any thing in the Church; what he does, is in a Collateral way; that were to bring a new Officer into the Church, and a Power new and forreign to execute the Goſpel, contrary to the Nature, and totally deſtructive to the Being of it. The *Magiſtrate* hath wayes, ſuch as *Chriſt* thought ſufficient, to promote the good of Religion, and propagate the growth of the Goſpel, without drawing the Civil Sword, which will make no more impreſſion in Spiritual Concerns, than it will do upon a Ghoſt, that hath no real body. In the execution of thoſe he ought to acquieſce, but if not content therewith, he will uſe the Civil power to force men to Believe and Worſhip according to his Light, and will take Offenders in the *Church*, and puniſh them by his Temporal power; What is this but to lord it over Gods Heritage, and to make the Goſpel-Church, and being a Member of it, a thing of greater, outward, carnal fear, bondage, and ſubjection to men, than ever the Law was? This uſe of the Temporal power, is the ſting that wounds all Liberty of Conſcience, and totally overthrows it. If the Magiſtrate, where I live, be an *Arrian*, a *Socinian*, or in any ſuch error, while he enforceth this, but in a Goſpel-way, and in Chriſts way of enforcing Truth, only by Inſtruction and Perſwaſion; this doth not mortally wound me, this does not *Petere jugulum* of my liberty to keep to the Truth; but if he come to eſtabliſh it by the Civil Power, and by that ſuppreſs all elſe as error, my liberty in a differing perſwaſion is totally gone. The admitting the

Magistrate to use the Temporal power in executing his judgment about Religion, hurries every man out of the world that is not of his mind; for whatsoever will make a man an Heretick, will bring a man to the Stake, and every opinion, that is not the *Magistrates*, must needs make a man so. If Christ have enjoyned the Temporal Power to be used, it must have its utmost effect, not only upon Hereticks within, but much more upon those that are Infidels without the *Church*. If the *Magistrate* be appointed to use such a Power, he must not tolerate any thing upon any terms, nor exempt it from the lash of that Power. Where will he find a Rule in the Gospel, to bear with some kind of Heresies, and not with others? He must not make submitting to a Civil penalty, to compensate for an Heresie, unless Christ had appointed that as the punishment of it; That's a selling of sin, and making a bargain for iniquity, for his own advantage and profit. That therefore which the *Magistrate* under the Gospel may not do (and without him I am sure the *Church* cannot do) in which Negative restraint upon him, all Liberty of Conscience is comprehended, and the Freedom *Christ* hath so dearly and fully purchased, compriſed; and which is chiefly intended to be made good by this Discourse, shall be declared in this following *Position*; which is:

That no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel men, to any part of the Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline of the Gospel.

The proof of which shall lye in the Reasons following. First, 'Tis a thing against the light of Nature so to do; and if the *Magistrates* Power be grounded in the Light of Nature, then to do a thing against that Light of Nature, must needs be very *Heterogenal*, and wholly out of his compass; it must needs be against the common Light and Reason of mankind, to force me to believe a thing wholly out of the compass of my knowledge and capacity, and which Nature reveals not to me. Such are all Gospel-Truths, they are not like the matters of the Moral Law, but they are things purely Supernatural, and of divine Revelation; such things as from the beginning of the world, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor never entered into any mans heart to conceive of: These

These things the Apostle saith, ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος: *A man with all the endowments of Nature discerneth not, because they are only Spiritually discerned.* No man can call Jesus the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost. Will you punish a man for not having the Holy Ghost? That is no way in his power to get, but is like the wind, that bloweth where and when it lists. 'Tis a strange contradiction to our common reason, to force men about things wholly unknown to them, and out of their own power. If force should be used at any time, it should be to bring men from *Paganism to Christianity*, for without that we cannot be saved; but when once *Christians*, we may be saved under different apprehensions; And yet we may not force a man to be a *Christian*: First, because 'tis unlawful; And Secondly, because 'tis impossible. 'Tis not lawful, because 'tis not Christs way of making *Christians*, nor a means by him appointed for that purpose. Secondly, 'Tis impossible, because force upon men will never beget, or change Principles or Opinions. And as we should not force men at the first to the Gospel, because till God reveals it, we are wholly ignorant of it: So we should not force men, that are under the Gospel, to any thing they believe not; for they are as great strangers still to every farther attainment of knowledge in the Gospel, till God please to reveal it, as they were at first to the whole; and therefore the Apostle calls us to *patience in these things, one with another, till God please to reveal himself.* The light of Nature must needs condemn that practice, for another to force me about such things, wherein my own eternal good or ill is only concerned; where it is not to be imagined, that I can have any aim, but my own Salvation, and can hurt none by my Belief, but my self. When I have used rational suitable means to inform another, I ought to acquiesce, it being not a supposition to be made, that a man would willingly design that which he knows will be his own ruin, and which will hurt no body but himself. He that forceth me to a Religion, makes me hate it, and makes me think, there wants reason and other evidence to evince it. Nature abhors compulsion in Religious things, as a spiritual rape upon the Conscience. No man by the light of Nature was ever angry with another, for not quitting his Conscience, till his judgment was suitably informed, because every man finds it an impossibility in himself so to do. That which some say, *That though we may not force men to believe, yet men may be forced to the outward means of believing*, is very little to the purpose: For if by outward means, they mean a bare outward act, distinct from any Religious Worship, no doubt Superiours may command it: But if they mean any Religious means, if the means be such, as my Conscience is not satisfied in, I ought not to be forced to it; if it be such, as I am satisfied

tisfied in, force is altogether needless, and it belongs not to this Discourse,

Secondly, To use force in Religion, is wholly unlawful in any hand whatever, because 'tis no means appointed by *Christ* to bring about any Gospel end; For the Magistrate to enforce the Laws of the Gospel by Temporal power, or compel men into the Gospel by such a power, is to act without the least precept or president, and to induce an Engine to execute the Gospel, contrary to the nature of *Christ* Kingdome (which is not of this world) and contrary to the nature of all Gospel-Institutions. The Magistrate, as he should be careful to see the Gospel put in execution; so, in the manner, *Christ* in his wisdom hath appointed for the doing of it, which is by his own Institutions, and his own invisible power operating and working with them: The great rule of the Gospel, is a rule of the Spirit in the hand of *Christ* as Mediator; and 'tis a rule in the hearts and spirits of men: and to set up a rule by any humane power, over any part of the Gospel, is highly to derogate from that mediatory dominion of *Christ*; Nay to use force, is not only to act without, but against the declared mind of *Christ*. Does not *Paul* positively deliver this? *That the weapons of the Gospel are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God*. 'Tis not Faggots and Halters, but Spiritual means, by which men are both to be brought in, and cast out of the Gospel-Church. 'Tis Hearing, and not forcing, by which Faith is wrought. The Sword of the Spirit is the weapon by which *Christ* does all, yea, by which he will destroy Antichrist, the greatest Gospel-enemy the world hath produced. Amongst all the Arguments, that are brought to prove the compulsatory power of the Magistrate under the Gospel, the greatest weight is laid upon the practice of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, and what they did under the Law in compelling men to the Worship of God then established: In the due consideration whereof, we shall find the truth in hand no way invalidated, and that what was then done by the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, cannot reasonably be made a rule to Magistrates now under the Gospel, and that the Analogy will no way hold, may be made appear, both from the different station and posture those Kings were in, from all Magistrates now, and also from the different condition of the *Church* then and now, and many circumstances peculiarly relating to both. First, The Worship and Policy of the *Jews*, being in it self Typical, and representive of what was to come hereafter; their Government was likewise so, and in their Kings very eminently: That *David* and *Solomon* did very plainly in the Type represent the Kingly dominion of *Christ*, none will deny; and 'tis as plain, that the very Throne of *David* it self, upon which the succeeding

ceeding Kings of *Judah* ſat, was likewiſe ſo; there being that Propheſie long before, *That the Scepter ſhould not depart from Judah, until* Shiloe *came*; and therefore the power *David* and *Solomon*, and the ſucceeding Kings of *Judah* (for amongſt the Kings of *Iſrael*, after *Solomon*, we find not one concerned for the true Worſhip of God) who were of the lineage of *David*, exerciſed, had a peculiarity in it, that is not applicable to any Magiſtrat now.

Secondly, God was pleaſed in thoſe times, upon all eminent occaſions of Reformation in his Worſhip, and proceedings of that nature, to ſend Prophets to declare his poſitive mind, and to put an end to all doubts that could be about ſuch things; nay, ſome of the Kings themſelves were Prophets immediately inſpired; and did not only take care of the Worſhip eſtabliſhed by *Moſes*, but did themſelves by divine Authority, bring in things of a new Inſtitution, into the Worſhip of God; this *David* did, and *Solomon*, in bringing Muſick into the Temple, and ſettling the courſes of the Prieſts, and were divinely inſpired to write part of the Holy Scriptures. No Magiſtrates now can pretend to any ſuch power in themſelves, nor have they any ſuch extraordinary direction to guide them, but are punctually obliged to whatever *Chriſt* hath revealed in the Goſpel; and therefore in this reſpect the Anlogy no way holds good.

Thirdly, The ſtate of the *Jewiſh Church* and *Commonwealth*, was ſuch, as wholly differ'd them from all others, ſince that was a *Church* and a State in the very conſtitution of them mixed together; none could be brought into one, but he was a member of the other; nor could a man be caſt out of the *Church*, but he was thereby caſt out of the *State*; to be outlawed, and excomunicated, was there amongſt the *Jews* the ſame thing. *Grotius* expreſſeth it well; *At that time* (ſaith he) *the Wiſdom in Divine and Humane Law was not divided*: and he proves it by this, *As the Magiſtrate did intermeddle in Church Affairs, ſo the Prieſt did intermeddle in Civil things: For* (ſaith he) *the Prieſt was a Judge, and did not only give Judgment in Sacred, but in Civil Affairs, being the beſt Interpreter of the whole Law.* And ſaith the ſame *Grotius* further, *That the Prieſt had Magiſtracy*; This alone may be proved, in *Deut.* 17. 8. *That he is to die, who obeyes not the Command of the Prieſt.* 'Tis moſt clear alſo, That *Eli* was Chief Prieſt in *Iſrael*, and Chief Judge in *Shiloe*. 'Tis not any way to be avoided, but that the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Power lay then interchangeably mixed; and with as equal reaſon may we bring Magiſtracy into the Miniſterial Power of the Goſpel, from what the Prieſts then exerciſed, and their example, as to bring ſuch a power in Religion into the Magiſtrates under the Goſpel, from the

the parallel of what those Kings did then. Besides, the Magistratical power was so absolutely necessary to the *Jewish Church*-Policy, so mixed, that it could not be upheld without it, the very Municipal Law of the Nation was their Religion: He that was Chief in the State, must needs be Head of the *Church*. They were a Holy People, living in a Holy Land, appointed to Worship in one Holy City, and in one Holy place of that City, and to offer upon one Altar in that Holy place. The *Church* of the Gospel is totally of another nature, perfectly distinct from the Civil State, can well subsist without a relation to it, and is no way intermixed in its Concerns with it; And therefore to say all Magistrates now, must do as those did, that govern'd such a mixed, complicated *Church* and *State* in one, carries no propotion at all of reason or equity in it; more then if a man should argue from a *Par ratio*, that what *Moses* did at first amongst the *Jews* (who was King in *Jeshuron*) that Kings may now do amongst *Christians* under the Gospel.

Lastly, What was then done, was by Gods Command, and was in a way suitable to the frame and state of the *Church* the *Jews* were imbodied in, and lay chiefly in bringing men from Idolatry to the Worship of the true God; (for in differences between Sect and Sect amongst themselves, there was nothing, that we find, done at any time, they continued till our Saviours time;) and putting such a kind of Worship in execution, as lay in outward carnal Services, and was in every minute particular, exactly set down, and determined. First, The state of the Gospel-Church now, is wholly differing from what that was, and is settled upon clear other grounds and principles. Secondly, Here is no command in the Gospel for the Magistrate to do any thing of that nature. Thirdly, Let it be granted as truth, that in parity of reason, because Magistrats were appointed to take care of Religion then, they are to do so still, it must of necessity be granted also, that they must do it by the means appointed by *Christ* under the Gospel, as they did heretofore, by those God appointed under the Law. It is an Inference very infirm, That because the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah* compelled men by Gods own appointment, to acknowledg the true God and forsake Idolatry, therefore Magistrates now may not only without, but against *Christs* commands, and the whole tenor of the New Testament, compel men to the Spiritual Belief and Worship of the Gospel. The truth is, the Civil power of the Magistrate is no means of *Christs* appointing, for the carrying on of the Gospel; the Gospel in the very nature of it, carries an Antipathy in it to all outward force. Instead of all the temporal promises, and corporal punishments under the Law, *Christ* makes this Declaration, *He that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not,*

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ſhall be damned; That's the language of the Goſpel; Chriſt ſets Hell, and Wrath to come, before men, and by his Spirit working upon, and convincing the Conſcience, works more admirable effects upon men that way, than all the outward puniſhments in the World could ever bring about; *The Word of Chriſt is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword; and can divide between the Soul and the Spirit, the Joynts and the Marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart.* We have in the *Hebrews*, a very perfect account of Gods dealing with men under the Law, and now under the Goſpel, and the plain difference in the manner of the one and the other, *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *He that deſpiſed the Law of* Moſes, *died without mercy, under two or three Witneſſes: Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under-foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace?* Here is the higheſt offence imaginable againſt the Goſpel; and the puniſhment, as 'tis clear in the next verſes, is not *Corporall*, but *Spirituall* and *Eternall*, and to fall into the hands of the living God himſelf to execute it. He that broke *Moſes* Law, fell but into the hand of man, and ſuffered corporal death; but this offence under the Goſpel brings a man to fall into the Hand of God for eternal death. The ſorer puniſhment he ſpeaks of, cannot be outward or corporal, for there can be no ſorer puniſhment of that kind, than what was inflicted under *Moſes's* Law, to put a man to death, and therefore he ſpeaks of another puniſhment in the nature of it. So *Piſcator* upon the place (*Gravioris ſupplicio ſcilicet Eterno*) the Supream puniſhment under the Law, was inflicted by *Moſes* upon the body, ſutable to that outward ſtate of things; that ſorer puniſhment for offences under the Goſpel, acording to the nature of it, is inflicted by God himſelf upon the Soul eternally; and ſo the kinds of the puniſhments under the Law and the Goſpel, ſutable to the offences relating to each, are here clearly diſtinguiſhed.

Thoſe Scriptures that are uſually urged out of the New Teſtament, to juſtifie Compulſion in the Magiſtrate, and corporal puniſhment for Spiritual offences, are of ſo little cogency, and ſo apparantly wreſted from their native ſenſe, that every eye may (if unprejudiced) perceive it. I will inſtance in two or three of thoſe, chiefly inſiſted on by Mr. *Prinne*, and thoſe who earneſtly contend that way. *Ananias* and *Saphira* were ſtruck to death by *Peter*: therefore corporal puniſhment is to be inflicted under the Goſpel. Who is there that does not ſee that whole buſineſs to be miraculous and extraordinary, as the healing the Lame and the Blind was? Firſt, The puniſhment is wholly extraordinary;

nary; and secondly, the ground of it so: For it was upon a Judgment passed on Hypocrisie, and Evil latent in the heart. However, if we will continue that Power to any now, we must (I hope) derive it to the Church, and not to the Magistrate. Another Scripture earnestly urged, is that of our Saviour, *Luke* 19. 27. *But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should raign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* This speech relates to the Parable before, which is of a Noble-man going into a far Countrey, to receive a Kingdom, and to return, and then to take an account of all his Servants, what they had done in his absence. What can be more clear, than that this Parable is spoken to set forth Christ's Ascension into Heaven, and his Return to Judgement, in the end of the World? And this place is a clear Prophetick expression of that Judgement Christ will then execute upon his Enemies both *Jewes* and *Gentiles*. The words of *Calvin* upon this place are very expres this way, and indeed 'tis not possible to interpret it any other; his words are these, *In this second Part he seemeth specially to reprove the* Jews, *yet he toucheth all, which in the absence of the Master do bend themselves to fall away. And Christ purposed not only to terrifie such with denouncing of horrible Vengeance; but also to keep his in faithful Obedience. For it is no light temptation to see the Kingdom of God shaken by the faithlesness of many. Therefore that we might remain quiet amongst so many tumultuous stirrs,* Christ *saith, That he will come again, and will be revenged at his coming, of that ungodly falling away.*

Another Scripture pressed to serve for the proof of this, is that wish, not Command, of *Pauls*, in *Gal.* 5. 12. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you.* This makes as little for the purpose as the other. Some amongst the *Galathians* highly pressed the observation of the *Jewish* Worship upon them, in Circumcision and other things; the Apostle bespeaks them to a Gospel--punishment, in the *Jewish* language; Casting-out under the Gospel, comes in the room of Cutting-off under the Law; the Apostle means a Gospel-rejection, under the *Jewish* terms of cutting-off, which was oppositely expressed to those that pressed the observance of the Law. So *Beza* upon the place. *Paulus ad pelliculae sectionem alludit, quam ipsi urgebant.* And a little after, *Possumus istud de Excommunicatione simpliciter intellegere, qualis fuit illa incestuosi Corinthii.* Nothing is more usual, than to express Gospel-matters in the Typical language of the *Jewish Church*. So the Saints are called *Priests*; their Alms, *Sacrifices*; and we are bid to eat the *Passover*. And so in that famous place of our Saviour, where he bids us, *If an Offender refuse to hear the Church, to count him as an Heathen*

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man and a Publican. 'Tis nothing but a Gospel-Precept expressed in the *Jewish* dialect. Of as little moment, or less if it may be, to the purpose in hand, are the other Scriptures insisted on. Let the New Testament be but fairly dealt with, and suffer'd to enjoy its own native sense, and we shall not find a word to countenance the execution of the Laws of the Gospel by Temporal force, nor to inflict upon any man corporal punishment, for a Spiritual offence committed in the Church. Our Saviour directly tells *Pilate* [and *Paul* to *Timothy* calls it a *good confession*] *That his Kingdom is not of this World*; (he means, no doubt, the Kingdom of the Gospel) and therefore his Empire would no way invade *Cæsars*; though the *Jews* told *Pilate*, *If he let Christ go, he was none of Cæsers friend.* His meaning was, That his Kingdom, as Head of his Church, was a Spiritual Kingdom, distinct from the World: and that as God governed the World by the Temporal power, in the hand of the Magistrate; so Christ governs his Kingdom by the Power of his Spirit, and by Officers and Institutions wholly different and distinct from the World, and suitable to such a Dominion. Nothing since Christ's Ascension hath more disturbed the *Christian World*, or brought more disorder into Religion, than mixing those two Dominions in their distinct powers; that of the World, and this of the Church together: 'tis absolutely necessary to keep these Powers distinct and several. The Magistrate will be most useful to the Church, by keeping the Civil Power in its due bounds; and the Church will be most safe and secure in the use of its Spiritual weapons. Let the Sword of Justice govern in one, and the Sword of the Spirit in the other, and men will be most happy in both.

That the Laws made to punish Offenders corporally under the *Jewish Church*, are not now to be executed without making our selves debtors to the whole Law, sufficiently appears. Take an Instance in that Law about putting Idolaters to death, where, if we consider the circumstances attending it, we shall find it impossible, nay unlawful now to be executed: Whosoever tempted another to Idolatry, was not to be concealed; but the person tempted was obliged to kill him himself, whether he were his Brother, Son, Wife, or whatever Relation it were. In the 13 of *Deut. verse* 9. *Thou shalt surely kill him, thy hand shall be first upon him, and then the hand of all the people, and they shall stone him.* And afterwards we find there, whole Cities of Idolaters are to be razed to the ground, and their Children and Cattel utterly destroyed. These are Laws, that cannot be now executed under the Gospel; nay, they are forbidden; for we are bid to *walk in Wisdom to those that are without, to do good to all men, and to give no offence, neither to* Jew *nor* Gentile.

Nay, Believing Husbands and Wives, are bid to live with their Unbelieving Relations, in hopes to convert them. Who can avoid, seeing that these Punishments, as well as the Promises, were relative to that People, and that State of things, to preserve them from the rest of the World, and expired with the distinction of *Jew* and *Gentile*.

Thus I have endeavoured to oppose the Magistrates using the Civil-Power to force Religion under the Gospel. First, Because 'tis against the Light of Nature; And secondly, 'Tis not only without, but against the Command of the Gospel so to do. Famous is that saying of *Tertullian* to *Scapula*; *It appertaineth unto the Authority of the Law of Man, and Nature, that every man worship as he thinketh good; and one mans Religion doth not hurt, nor profit another: neither is it any piece of Religion to inforce Religion; which must be undertaken by a man's own accord, and not through violence.* So thought *Tertullian* antiently. So saith *Lactantius*, *Who shall inforce me either to believe what I will not, or not to believe what I will?* So saith *Casidor*, *Religion cannot be forced.* And *Bernard* hath an excellent saying to the same purpose, *Faith is to be planted by perswasion, not obtruded by violence.* *Bede* tells us, That here in *England*, so soon as King *Ethelbert* was converted by *Austin* the Monk, he made a Law, *That none should be compelled to Religion; having understood that Christ's Service ought to be voluntary, and not compelled.*

A third Reason against using Force and Compulsion about things under the Gospel, is, Because 'tis not adequate to the Malady; for if the meaning be to make a man forsake Errour, and imbrace the Truth, 'tis no Remedy sutable to the Disease, nor will it ever reach such a Distemper, or effect such a Cure. The Disease lies in the Soul, and in the Understanding; the compelling and punishing the Body will never help it; the end will be wholly lost: A man can never be forced to alter or imbrace an Opinion, he may deny it, or conceal it; but if he had a desire, through fear, or other slavish considerations, to do it, yet he cannot, and so a man is compelled to an impossibility. This usually makes Hypocrites, and at last Atheists, but never makes a right Convert: So the Souls of men this way are endangered, the Devils Interest promoted; but neither the Salvation of Souls, nor the Honour of God, by enlarging Truth, any way furthered. He that useth no other *Medium* but Force to me, makes a Lion and a Mastiff-Dog as capable of converting me, and giving Laws to my understanding, as he. We are bid to *restore persons fallen into error, by a spirit of meekness, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.* So *Paul* to *Timothy*, *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give repentance.* No man

eve

ever yet did any good to himself or others, by forcing a man against the Law of his own Light and Reason. How many that through fear and oppression have gone against their Light, have repented openly, to the shame and disgrace of those who violently obtruded Principles upon them, contrary to what was natively and properly their own.

Take amongst many, one famous instance, recorded by *Socrates* in his Ecclesiastical History. The Emperour *Valens*, by threats and menaces to confiscate and banish him, made *Eusius* Bishop of *Cyzicum* turn Arrian, and approve the Decrees of the Council of *Arminium*. The effect of it was, *Eusius* presently fell into horror of Conscience, openly at *Cyzicum* recanting what he had done, crying out of the Emperours unjust cruelty, and made all men loath such a proceeding. A late Author undertakes to justifie the use of Force in Religion, from the Opinion of Saint *Austine*, whose Opinion at first, as is well known, was, *That it was no way lawful to use Force to men of differing Opinions in Religion.* The retraction of that, and the change of his mind was occasioned by a particular accident at *Hippo*; and it may be, if we consult all circumstances, we shall find his last Opinion had more need of a retractation than his first; and yet at last he is very positive against all capital punishment, his words are, *Nullis tamen bonis*, 'Tis a thing, sayes he, *that pleaseth no good man, that any Heretick should be put to death.* We may see by this, how men do curtail and enlarge these things, according to their interests and particular affections, and set bounds at their own pleasure; some are for one kind of temporal severity, and some for another: and so when we leave the Scriptures, that give no direction for any, we lose our selves, and wander as the fancies and interests of men lead us. But the Authors words are these; *Though Force* (saith he) *will not remove the Error, yet it may prevent its spreading; Though it do not take away the Cause, yet it hinders most of the mischievous Effects.* The mischievous effects of an Opinion, is considered, as it relates to a man himself who is possessed with it, and as it relates to others, who may be by him infected with it: Force doth in no wise hinder the spreading of an Opinion; for if a man be punished for declaring to others what he thinks is right, and he thinks himself bound in conscience to declare; others are more easily taken, and by his *sufferings* made more pleased with his *Notion*, and sooner become his *Proselytes*. In the other case, he that forceth me to deny my Opinion, sins in doing it, but I sin likewise if I comply with him: for such mischievous effects, as relate to the person himself possessed with an Opinion, hinders them not at all, unless you can convert him by it; for it either confirms him in one Error, or leads him into a worse: If he stand it out,

and ſuffer, he will be the more rooted in his perſwaſion by it, and be apt to think want of Arguments brings men to Club-Law: If he comply againſt his Light, he runs then into an apparent and certain evil that way. But the Author proceeds, and tells us, *In a little time it will remove the cauſe of the Error:* That is to ſay, Forcing men, if you do it long enough, will convert them; and the reaſon he gives, is this, *Becauſe* Paul *ranks his Hereſies amongſt the works of the fleſh*; and it is not ſeated ſo ſolely in the mind, but that it hath often no ſublimer motives then other ſenſual tranſgreſſions; and as outward conſiderations are ſometimes the cauſe, ſo they may be the cure of it. That ever any man did change an Opinion, firſt or laſt, by being forced, ſince the World began, is without inſtance, and impoſſible in the nature of the thing to be: One ſayes well, *You may as well cure a man of the Cholick by bruſhing his Coat, or fill a mans belly with a Syllogiſme.* Theſe things do not communicate in matter, and ſo neither in action or paſſion. But Hereſie is a work of the fleſh, ſo is every miſtake of the Soul; Hereſie is a work of the Soul rather in miſ-believing, than miſ-doing; 'tis a thing in opinion, rather than fact. The Apoſtle, in *Gal.* 5. where Hereſie is reckoned amongſt the works of the fleſh, does not put the diſtinction between works of the fleſh, as things outwardly acted, oppoſite to what is inwardly believed; but by the fleſh he means the corrupt and carnal mind, oppoſite to the Spirit of God; for he ſayes plainly in the Verſe before, *The fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh.* By the fleſh there, he means the corrupt ſtate of man in Soul and Body; ſo that Hereſie may be a work of the fleſh, and yet purely ſeated in the mind: Every corruption in the mind, is a work of the fleſh, and yet as 'tis there only, is in ſome ſence a thing ſpiritual and ſpeculative. But ſaith he, *Outward conſiderations are ſometimes the cauſe of an Opinion, and may be ſometimes the cure of it.* If outward conſiderations, ſutable to a conviction of my underſtanding, have wrought upon my underſtanding, and made me really believe a thing, there is then no proportion at all of reaſon, to ſay, *That force, becauſe 'tis an outward thing, wholly incapable of working upon my underſtanding, may make me as well disbelieve it.* And if thoſe outward conſiderations he means, have not really convinced me, then 'tis not my Opinion: Either outward conſiderations are the ground of ſuch Opinions, or they are not; if they be, they will beſt diſcover themſelves in their effects: ſuch cauſes are beſt ſo known, and only ſo known, and thoſe effects will be obvious, if they be evil, to a due puniſhment; if they be not the cauſe of them, 'tis firſt, a ſuperlative want of charity, to make our ſelves evil Judges of other mens hearts, and then an eminent piece of injuſtice, to puniſh men upon

upon such a false supposition. He that will take upon him to judge the grounds of any mans Principles, which he knows not, may make any Opinion have what Original he pleaseth. 'Tis a most absurd thing to believe any man for outward respects, should suffer all reproach and persecution: You may as well say, all the Martyrs suffered only to set up a Pillar, and get themselves a name; 'tis obvious enough to any impartial eye, those outward considerations are more probably to be mens temptations that go another way.

Fourthly, No man under the Gospel ought to be compelled to believe or practise any thing: [and if not to believe, then not to practise, for the practice ought to correspond with, and be but the counter-part of the belief; 'tis strangely unreasonable to require uniformity in the practice, where there is variety and difference in the Judgement; 'tis to bid a man go directly against his Light; 'tis miserable to rend a man into two pieces, his Conscience in one part, and his outward man and practice in another part: God arrests him, and draws him in a way suteable to his rational Soul one way, and men by means, wholly contrary, another: Who, think we, has the greatest right; and whether is it better to obey God or man in such a case? Those that thus impose upon men, do what in them lies to ruine them eternally.] I say, 'tis not reasonable to compel men to believe or practise; (for practice should suppose belief,) Because God tells so very often, *He only accepts a willing Service in his Worship, and abhors all other*; God detests the smell of a Sacrifice, where the heart is not, where the heart is far from him; and 'tis impossible it should be near him, where a man is compelled directly against his own judgement. How much does the beauty of the Gospel lie in this, that Gods People are made by him a willing People, and that God hath his Creature wholly in his Service: Such are the Converts of the Gospel, where every man is in his rational Soul so satisfied, enlightened, and convinced, that he does all freely: 'Tis a severe thing to enjoyn me by penal Laws, to worship God in a way I neither like, nor he accepts; which he does not, though it be what he has appointed for the matter; if I come not in the manner he has likewise appointed to it, I shall neither please him, nor advantage my own Soul. This was the case of the Jews, when God hated their solemn assemblies, and said, *Incense was an abomination to him.* 'Tis usually false worship that needs force; 'twas *Jeroboam* that upon Politick grounds began to force a Religion, and 'tis said of him, *He made* Israel *to sin, by compelling them to* Dan *and* Bethel. If men intend to make Converts to God, they must not do more for him, than he does for himself; he never violates the liberty of the rational Soul, but approves

proves things to the understanding; if they under this pretext intend to make Proselytes to their own power, 'tis very sinful.

Fifthly, The practice of Christ and the Apostles, positively contradicts this course; they could have commanded what power they had pleased, if that had been the way of settling the Gospel in the world: Christ would have no fire come down from Heaven, but that of the Holy Ghost; nor no Sword used in the Church, but that of the Spirit; he bids them *Teach all Nations, Baptizing them &c.* that is his way of initiating men into the Church; Not as the *Spaniards* Convert the *Indians*, who leave them no choice, but to be Baptized or Murthered. Men are first to be enlightened, and then led into conformable practice. *Paul* prayes for men, *That the eyes of their understandings might be enlightened*, And our Saviour when he preached, called for *an eye and an ear, to hear and discern his Doctrine.* 'Tis no matter for either, where Force is the *Medium*. This deserves to be very well weighed, that the Apostles never urged the Truths of the Gospel, in their infallible Ministry of them, upon farther or other terms than perswasion and ratiocination, and give every man freedom of debate, and counted it a noble thing in the *Bereans*, to examine the Scriptures, *Whether the things they preached were so or no.* After all means used, every man was left to his own Light. *Paul* professeth he was *not Lord over any mans Faith.* The truth is, that part of the Soul, where Faith and Conscience is seated, cannot be reached by any compulsion; and therefore force reaching but to outward practice, there can be no other end of it, but to make us suffer, or else practise contrary to what we believe.

Sixthly, Forcing men to a Religion, which is wholly supernatural, and imposing Principles upon them, which are out of the compass of Moral Light, as all Gospel-Principles are, supposeth a perfect infallibility in the Imposers, and the thing imposed, or else 'tis strangely unreasonable; to force men against their own light, to be guided by ours, unless we are sure we cannot mistake, is a strange absurdity. There is some excuse for being guided by a mistake of our own, if it be the best light we have, but there is no excuse for being guided by a mistake of another mans. Three sorts of men there have been in the world, eminent for Imposition in Religion, and common discretion taught them, that the necessary support of such Imposition must be a pretended Infallibility in Themselves and their Doctrines. Such were the *Jewish Rabbies* of old, who had so deluded the people, that *Luther* tells us, *The Jews thought they were bound to believe what their Rabbies taught, though they should say, the right hand was the left, and the left the right.* Such also was *Mahomet* and the *Muftyes*, who impose all upon the ground

ground of infallibility; *Mahomet* at the first laying this down as a Maxime, that there was to be no debate, nor discourse of what he prescribed; and his *Mufties* subdue the people by carrying on the same ever since. *Grotius* gives a very full account of this, in his Book of the *Truth of Christian Religion*, *the Third Sect. Famous for imposition are the Popes and Priests of the Roman Church, and they with the Hammer of Infallibility beat down all Opposition.* That's a refuge never fails to justifie things against Scripture, Reason, and common Senses of man; That the arrogant assumption of Infallibility, since the time of Christ and his Apostles, is nothing else but a Political Cheat upon the world; God by his Providence, in fact, as well as otherwise, hath made it clear to us; since those who pretend to it, have as often contradicted each other, and erred, even in the Opinions each of other, as any people in the World: God in his just Judgment leaving those that pretend to be so much above all men, to appear as weak, and as depraved men, as any the world has. But Imposition, where Infallibility is not pretended, nor claimed, must needs be but weakly underset. He that imposeth a Religion upon me, intends I should take his Light instead of my own; Imposing a Religion upon me, supposeth a Duty in me of perfect Subjection, or else 'tis ridiculous, and signifies nothing. Admitting a man to use his own Light in judging, destroyes the Being of Imposition in Religion, upon any tolerable grounds of Reason; and no body is to be obeyed in whatever they command, but those that are infallible. Who ever it be, the Church or the Magistrate, that confesseth himself fallible, must needs admit a possibility of mistake, and so gives ground unquestionable, to reason and consider what is offer'd to me; and to what purpose will that be but farther to ensnare me, if I must necessarily obey? and, unless I discover the weakness and mistake of what is put upon me, I may refuse it. Amongst the Protestant Churches, where Infallibility is not claimed, and this Doctrine taught, That if any man command any thing sinful [of which every mans Conscience is likewise acknowledged the Judge] we are to suffer passively, and not obey actively. There can be no other success of Imposition, but to make me suffer for being an honest man; and following the Light of my own Conscience: for if the thing enforced be according to my own judgment, forceing me to it is needless; if it be not, I am bound by principles, acknowledged by all, not to obey, and so the event must needs be my suffering in performing my duty. Nay, suppose further, that the thing enjoyned be infallible in its own nature, and the person enjoyning it be so in that very act, yet till I am convinced in my reason of both those, they are to me as if they were not

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so, and I shall never upon that account yeeld implicite obedience; and when I am convinced of such an *infallibility*, my own reason, without any other motive, forceth me into subjection, as that which is best for me. No man can or ought to command me to alter my Judgment and Conscience, guided by the best Light I have, till he can shew me, that as I am fallible, so he is infallible, and that he is so in that act of imposing a Religion upon me; my own Light is more safe to me, than any other mans, that is not so intrusted, and is but equally fallible with my self, though in knowledge never so far above me. He that owns, he may be mistaken as well as I, and yet would have me obey what he commands, against what I believe, would at the same time make me both a sinner and a fool; a sinner to God, and a fool to my own reason; a sinner, to depart from my own Conscience, by which God expects I should be guided, and by which I shal hereafter be judged; and a fool, to eat by another mans taste; and to part with my own reason, without any assurance of being guided by a better. A Magistrate imposeth Uniformity in Religion, acknowledgeth himself not infallible, but that he may be under mistakes; acknowledgeth likewise that no man is bound to obey him actually in any thing sinful; acknowledgeth that the Judgment of what is sinful, lies in every mans own Conscience, as to his particular actings, and that every mans Conscience, though erroneous, is to be followed till better informed. Take the coherence of these things, which are all granted Truths amongst us, and the result will be two-fold; First, that a man that cannot in Conscience conform to such an imposed Uniformity, as thinking it sinful, is punished for doing what is acknowledged to be his duty. Secondly, There can never be any other end in forcing Uniformity, where such Principles are taken for granted, but to bring such men into suffering, who resolve to keep their integrity.

Seventhly, Every man in the World is to be a Judge for himself, in all matters of the Gospel-Religion, and so ought not to be forced to believe or practise any thing he is not convinced of. To what end is preaching or discoursing to men, but that they may judge of what is sayd? A man being obliged to answer for himself, he must needs be so to judge for himself. And this foundation once laid, upon which many of our most irrefragible Arguments against the *Papists* are built, all pretensions of imposing upon men, contrary to their own Judgments and Consciences, will with apparent reason fall to the ground: For if I stand obliged to God, as a Creature by him enabled and fitted so to do, to make a Judgment within my self, according to the measure of Light I have, of all things I believe or practise in Religion, then I can never

never come under an obligation to obey any Commands that compel me against my Light, nor ever to follow the Judgments of others, farther than I am convinced by it, and it becomes my own. Now to make this evident, that every man under the Gospel is bound at last to judge for himself, in all things relating to God and his own Soul, let these thing following be considered.

First, Every person in the World is under a Scripture command, *to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good*; What ever comes from Ministers by way of instruction, or from Magistrates by way of command, 'tis a duty to give a due respect to it, and seriously to weigh it, and at last, by the best Light we have, to make a judgment of it, and settle the Conscience about it; but no way are we bound to follow blindfold, whether we like it or not: To prove and examine, shows a necessary use of Reason, and an act of the Understanding, in weighing and pondering, and to hold fast in chooſing and determining. We are bid *to obey God, rather then man.* That Command can never be put in practice, but by judging what is of God, and what is of man; and it must necessarily refer to a Judgment of our own; for all mens pretence is, that what they enjoyn, is of God.

Secondly, Every man is bound to do, what ever he does in Religion, in Faith: for that the rule is positive, *Whatsoever is not of Faith, is sin; He that doubts is damn'd if he eat*; to do an action in Faith, is to do it upon a judgment made within my self, that what I do, is that I ought to do, and that I perform my duty therein. And herein I must necessarily be my own Judg, no other mans Faith can so serve my turn, as to excuse me from sin; If any thing be commanded me contrary to my own Judgment, I can never obey it in Faith, and so never obey it without sin. The ground of all Faith lies in the information and satisfaction of the Judgment; without the concurrence of that, no action in Religion can ever be done in Faith, and so never be done as it ought to be done. And therefore it is that the Apostle pronounced him *happy, that condemneth not himself in the thing that he alloweth.* A man through an erroneous Judgment may do a thing in Faith, and yet do it sinfully: his Faith will not excuse him; but yet he is bound to exercise Faith in every thing he does. He that doth any thing without Faith, sins in it; he that doth an ill action in Faith, hath an excuse for it; thereby *à tanto*, though not *à toto*; so that in the one, Faith lessens the sin of the action, and in the other makes it compleatly good.

Thirdly, Every man must needs be a Judge for himself, because God will accept or not accept, and deal with him here and hereafter, according to what his own Judgement was, and his suitable conforming

himself thereto. For this we have a plain Scripture, Every man shall give an account of himself to God; every mans understanding is his talent, God expects he should imploy it, and not hide it, and accordingly deals with men; *Where much is given, much is required; and where little is given, little is required.* Whence comes the satisfaction of Conscience in this World, but that while we walk sincerely according to our Light, we rest satisfied of an acceptance with God, and we find accordingly God accepteth such, and abhors an Hypocrite. That God will hereafter judge men according to the knowledge they have, and the Judgment they make within themselves, the Scripture is every where clear. *He that knows his Masters will and doth it not, he shall be beaten with many stripes.* God will judge men out of their own mouths, and out of their own breasts; if then God deals with men here, and judges them hereafter according to the Light they have, 'tis that sure that should be the rule of our living. To say, I did what others bid me, and never judged within my self, what God required from me, nay, when I was convinced, he required the contrary from me, will be but a poor excuse, when mens Consciences shall come upon the Stage, to do the Office of excusing or accusing in that great day. Our Divines say very right, when they tell us, every mans Light is to be his guide; if it be false and erronious, he lies under sin, because 'tis his duty to be better informed; but till he is so, 'tis his duty to pursue that light he has, as the lesser evil.

Fourthly, To say a man is not to judge for himself, is to unman him, and change him from a rational Creature to a Bruit; What has God lighted such a Candle in man as knowledge and understanding for, but to judge and discern by, and be a guide to him? God that has given a man an ability to judge, does he ever forbid, nay, does he not always enjoyn the use of it that way? Besides, 'tis impossible that a man (supposing him a reasonable Creature) should consent to any thing without passing first an act of his Judgment upon it. He that yeelds up himself to the infallibility of *Rome*, passes a Judgment first, that 'tis best to do so; and therefore when men are perswaded to joyn themselves in the *Roman* Church, and trust wholly to that, in believing whatever the Church belives, they are first admitted to judge, that 'tis best to do so; and are made first Judges for themselves, before they resign up their Judgment to others; to what end else were all perswasion and reasoning about such matters? The *Papists*, while they profess against this private Judgment, as a detestable thing, that every man should be a Judge for himself, they cannot deny, but that every man is actually so; and therefore *Bellarmine* flies to this sorry shift, he sayes, *Before*

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men are in the Church, they must judge for themselves; but when they are once in the Church, they must resign themselves to her Infallibility. The *English* of which is; *That before a man is a* Romanist, *he may use his Reason; but after must be led and driven like a Brute.* And the truth is, A Church Constituted with an implicite Belief, under an imposed Infallibility, differs little from a dumb Herd of Cattel. Either in such a case I make use of my reason, or I do not; If I do not, I cease to be a man under the denomination of a rational Creature: If I do, I must necessarily be a Judge for my self; for if I am guided by another judgment than my own, as that I think best for me; there is as clear an act of my judgment in so doing, as if I were punctually directed by my own.

This we call knowledge in men. God hath given to taste Principles and Notions, as the Mouth tasteth Meats; take away once the use of this taste, and you take away the noblest Accomplishment of a man: You make a man, created in honour, if he do not understand, like a Beast that perisheth; as the Eye guideth the Body, so the judgment of the Understanding guides the Soul; force a man once from the use of this, and you betray him into a dark Chaos of slavery, and brutish subjection, and render him an object fit for the same scorn and contempt, that *Sampson* found when he had lost his two eyes. By these things we may plainly discern, that the necessity of every mans being a Judge for himself in divine things, is grounded both upon Scripture and Reason; and that 'tis not only lawful, but a positive Duty, God expects the performance of, and obliges every man living to. And this being so; for any Power on Earth to compel men to believe or practise contrary to their Judgment and Conscience, must needs be both unlawful and unreasonable.

Lastly, The ill success Force and Imposition in Religion hath ever had, and which it hath a necessary tendency to have, may very well make us out of love with it; there can possibly be no other effect of it, but either to debauch men in their Consciences, or bring violent Persecutions upon their Persons and Estates. If the first, Those that impose, bring a guilt upon themselves, and partake of the sin, as being the great occasion and causers of it. So did *Jeroboam* when he made *Israel* to sin, the guilt stuck to himself, as well as to the people. If the second, Men are sufferers from men, for doing their duty to God, and part with their Estates, because they cannot with their integrity; and in this case the punnishment falls upon the sufferers, but the guilt still upon the Imposer. Either a Magistrate, imposing in Religion, is to be obey'd in whatsoever he Commands, or not; if he be, we shall

then excuse those that obey'd *Jeroboam*, and cast reproach upon all the Martyrs, that have suffered for refusing the sinful Commands of Superiours. If they be not, There must be then some judgment, when they are to be obey'd, and when not; and that can be no other than every mans own Conscience. And if every mans own Conscience, and the Light of it, is to be his Rule, by which he is to judge; Then when ever I refuse to obey a Command in Religion, because my Conscience tells me, 'tis sinful, I am plainly punished for doing my duty, and following that Light God hath given to guide me. Nay, Suppose my Conscience be erroneous, 'tis confessed by all 'tis a sin not to follow it till better informed, and if so, I am sure 'tis likwise a sin to force me out of it. *Conscientia quamvis errans semper ligat ita ut ille peccet qui agit contra conscientiam quoniam agit contra voluntatem Dei quamvis non materialiter & vere tamen formaliter & interpretive.* Amesi de Cas. Con. If we look upon this practice in the Roman Church, where 'tis in its Meridian, What a Massacre of Souls hath it made? What darkness and miserable ignorance is grown up in the Layety by it? and amongst the Clergy what pride, corruption and tyranny? Where it has been practised in the Reformed Churches, it has introduced nothing but divisions, and animosities, and the sad effects of them; those who have been freed from the Roman Imposition, and enlightened in the Protestant Truths, being less able to endure Imposition, then any; being by their departure from *Rome*, furnished with Principles, that do wholly overthrow any such power, by whomsoever exercised. How little hurt would variety of Opinions about Religion do in the world, if it were not for this? What hurt could any mans Opinion do me, if he used no other Weapons, than Reasoning and Discourse? 'Tis the imposing Opinions, makes them pernitious and troublesome to the world, and makes every party strive to get the Magistrate on their side, that they may suppress the rest, and turn Religion into a worldly interest. Religion troubles no body, as Christ left it, but as Men make it. By this practice, men of differing judgments in Religion, can never live together in the world, nor enjoy the great advantages, they might afford one to another in Civil Concerns, and in Religion too, so far as they agree; because their Consciences will not let them come up to the practice of an imposed Uniformity in all things. How different from this were the thoughs of *Paul*, he bids us *joyn together, so far as we agree; and in other matters wherein we do agree, to wait till God shall reveal himself to us.* What an unreasonable thing is it, to oblige Christians, either to suffer, or follow all the changes made by humane Powers in Religion, upon what Worldly or Political ends soever; to have the

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Conſcience floating about, at the Magiſtrates pleaſure, as his property, which is only Gods peculiar? Thoſe that lived in the dayes of *Henry* the Eight, *Edward* the Sixth, Queen *Mary*, and Queen *Elizabeth*, had occaſion enough to experience this; who muſt either have withſtood a conformable practice with ſuffering, or elſe ſurely have been ſometimes out of the way. But that which ſhould put us perfectly out of all charity with the uſe of force in Religion, is, when we conſider the true Worſhip of the Goſpel can never be eſtabliſhed by it. You may eſtabliſh a falſe Worſhip, or a formal out-ſide Worſhip, but never make ſuch Worſhipers, as Chriſt ſpeaks of, when he ſaith, *The true Worſhippers under the Goſpel, are ſuch, who worſhip the Father in Spirit, and in Truth.* You may eſtabliſh a falſe Worſhip, that is a worſhip of mens appointing; for if they be but outwardly obey'd, in what they inſtitute, they look no farther. *Jeroboams* buſineſs was to keep the people from *Jeruſalem*; if they came but to *Dan* and *Bethel*, he cared for no more; he little minded the Religion he had ſet up, for he made Prieſts of the meaneſt of the People; his end was Political, to bring men into ſubjection to himſelf. You may alſo eſtabliſh a formal Worſhip, you may by force make men hypocritically conform to the out-ſide of true Worſhip; you may force men to the Sacraments, but without they be qualified with thoſe Prærequiſites God requires, inſtead of performing an acceptable Service, you force them to commit a great Sin.

That you cannot by force eſtabliſh the right Goſpel-Worſhip, appears by theſe two things. Firſt, 'Tis a Spiritual Worſhip: And, Secondly, 'tis a voluntary Worſhip. Firſt, 'Tis a Spiritual Worſhip, there is no one part of Goſpel-Worſhip lies in the bare outward performance of any Duty; The *Word* (*Paul* ſaid) *did not profit, becauſe 'twas not mixed with Faith.* In Hearing, Praying, receiving Sacraments, and all others, there is more required than the bare outward act, 'tis Faith in theſe things, and that which is Spiritual in them, that gives them an acceptance before God; and that men cannot be forced into: you can never compel into that which is purely Spiritual. Secondly, 'Tis a voluntary Worſhip, the Goſpel is a Proclamation made to *every one that willeth, to eate and drink of the Bread and Water of life.* 'Tis the very evidence of Chriſts Power under the Goſpel, *That his People are made a willing People*; and therefore the Service of the Goſpel cannot be forced: 'Tis a contradiction to ſay, *That may be well done by compulſion, that ought to be freely and voluntarily done.*

Two things are with great vehemency oppos'd to this, and which do indeed contain the greateſt ſhew of Reaſon for compulſion in Religion, of all the Arguments brought for it. Firſt, 'tis ſaid, *That compelling*

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men to the outward Means of Religion, in a way God ordinarily is to work inward Conversion. Secondly, *That though it do not so work, yet a bare outward compliance is acceptable to God, and blessed by him; and for this the example of* Ahab's *humiliation, and the* Ninevites *Fast, is brought.*

To the first, I say, That some things under the Gospel are as well Moral, as Religious, and have a foundation in the Light of Nature, as well as in the institution of the Gospel; and to these, men may be commanded by the Magistrate. As Hearing is an act purely Moral, as wel as Divine; Aman may be injoyned to hear the Gospel preached, without being forced to give his assent to it. The Light of Nature guids the Magistrate to instruct his Subjects in what ever he thinks for their eternal good, and the Light of Nature obligeth every man to hearken to every providential instruction God affordeth, and improve it for his good. A man that is only commanded to hear and receive instruction, is dealt with as a rational Creature, and forced to nothing; the judgment is still left in himself. A man may hear, and be no way concluded; Hearing is in order to choice and determination. But such things as are purely of a Gospel-Institution, and are perfectly supernatural, to these men may not be any way compelled, nor can we ever expect a blessing upon it; First, Because instruction, and not compulsion, is the way Christ hath appointed to bring men, and fit them to partake of all Gospel-Ordinances. Secondly, Because a man joyning himself to the Gospel, and partaking in the Ordinances and Worship of it, upon no other ground but compulsion, and is in his heart all the while either ignorant of it, or against it, sins in all he does; and therefore though God can over-rule the sins of men to good ends, yet must not we do evil that good may come of it, nor anticipate Converts to the Gospel by undue means. God can work mens conversion by any means, or without means, but yet we are bound to seek mens conversion by such means as God hath appointed for that end, and left us under an Obligation to prosecute. Mr. *Prynne*, who is earnest for compulsion, and corporal punishment under the Gospel, when he is told, That it is not a way to make Converts, and to work upon the understanding; replies, *That corporal sufferings, afflictions, and pressures upon the outward man, are an usual means of Gods sanctifying and saving men.* 'Tis true, a means that he over-rules, and a means he reserves in his own hand, to use as he pleaseth, but no means appointed in the Gospel for us to use, and so we cannot expect the concurrance of Gods Operation, which can only make it effectual upon it. Because God many times sanctifies the pain and sickness of mens Bodies, and the sufferings and losses in their Estates and Reputations, to the saving of their Souls; We may

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not (I hope) bring these things upon men for that end, because they are not means God hath intrusted us with the use of; nor has indeed any outward force upon the Body, a natural tendency in it self to alter a mans mind, but rather the contrary; but God by his influence upon it, can over-rule it that way, and unless it be by him a means appointed, that so we may expect such an operation, 'tis both unlawful and unreasonable to make use of it. In short, if by compelling men to outward means, be meant only to compel a man to a bare outward moral action, and such are all things relating to instruction, men may be commanded to it. If by means be meant a Religious-Gospel-means of Christs Institution, and purely relating to the Gospel, such as the Sacraments, and the like, no man ought to be compelled to them, nor can we expect any good from such a compulsion, farther than as God is pleased to bring good out of evil.

For the second thing, That though compulsion do not work real conversion, yet an outward conformity, though there be nothing else, is pleasing to God; that is, That to compel a man by force to profess he believes that which he no way believes, & to practise that which he no way likes, is a Reformation God approves of, this I utterly deny; unless it can be made appear, that God is pleased with Hypocrisie, accepts the outward Man, where the heart and the inward Man is far from him, and has no better means to bring men into the Church, than unreasonable compulsion, which must needs beget an unreasonable service. As such a Conformity can never please God in the persons conforming, so neither in the persons imposing. Not in the persons conforming; because they do it not from a right Principle, nor to a right end they do it, either without knowledge ignorantly, or against knowledge unwillingly. Besides, he that comes to partake of any Gospel-Ordinance in an undue manner [which he must needs do, that comes only by compulsion] sins in the very act: He that receives the Sacrament without a due qualification, sins in the very act; and therefore such Conformity may satisfie men, but can never please God. Not in the persons imposing, because they do not execute any Law of Christs in so doing, and therefore it will be said, *Who required this at your hands?* The forcing an outward Reformation in manners, is quite of another nature, that the Magistrate may and ought to do, and is a thing highly pleasing to God, a thing taught by the Light of Nature, commanded by God so to be, and a thing that is well done both in those that command, and those that obey; when the bare outward act of evil is restrained and forborn, and the contrary commanded and practised. The forcing men to refrain from the practice of gross evil and wickedness, though

though they do it in Hypocrisie, has a wide difference from the forcing men to perform Gospel-Duties in Hypocrisie. Moral Actions are positively good and evil in their own nature; Gospel-Duties performed, are only so, as they are circumstantiated. And therefore the two Instances of *Ahab* and the *Ninevites* will no way fit this matter; What was done by the *Ninevites*, for ought appears, was well done, with all the circumstances that should make it to be so; for our Saviour saith, *They repented at the Preaching of* Jonah.

What *Ahab* did, will be clearly differenced in two things; First, it was a voluntary action; And Secondly, it was only a Moral action. 'Twas voluntary, for it arose from the dictates of his own Conscience, upon what the Prophet *Elijah* said to him. And Secondly, it was purely a Moral act, his Humiliation was no other; He himself was an Hypocrite, and his Service was hypocritical, and abominable in the sight of God; yet the outward act of his Humiliation was in it self good, and God rewards it with an outward blessing. That men may be compelled about actions Morally good and evil, is out of doubt, and that God does likewise with outward blessings and judgements reward and punish Moral good and evil, is also plain. But herein lyes the difference of forcing men in things Moral, and things Divine: In things Moral, the action in it self, however circumstantiated, is positively good or evil. Things of Divine Institution are quite otherwise; there the manner of the performance makes the Action good or evil. He that Sacrificeth an Oxe, is as if he killed a Man; He that killeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck. Where the manner of performing the Command is not observed, as well as the bare outward act of performance. And so in all Gospel-Duties, the Institutions of Christ, as Baptism, the Lords Supper, and the rest, the actions themselves in those things are not simply good; nay, they are accidentally evil, unless they have all the due circumstances attending them; the goodness of those things depends wholly upon Institution, and there the manner, as well as the matter, must be punctually observed. Nay, the manner of doing such things determines the matter of them; for if they be performed in their due manner, the Action is good; if not, the Action it self is sinful.

Having thus far endeavoured to establish this Truth, That the exercise of force by the hand of the Civil Power, is no means appointed by Christ, either for setling or regulating the Churches of the New-Testament; and is a thing in its own nature altogether unreasonable so to be; And that Princes and Magistrates under the Gospel should imploy their care, to see the Laws of Christ's Kingdom put in execution,

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in the way and manner he himself hath appointed, and ought to rest themselves satisfied therewith, as that which his infinite Wisdom hath provided, and to leave things that are purely Gospel-offences to Gospel-punishments, as most adæquate and proper; knowing well, that if after such punishments inflicted, Errors and Heresies shall continue in the Church, Christ will over-rule the Being of them, for holy ends and purposes, according to that of *Paul*, There must be Heresies, that those that are approved, may be made manifest: which though it be no good ground to indulge Heresie, from any punishment Christ hath appointed for it; yet 'tis a very good ground to satisfie our selves upon, after all Christs means used, and to stop us from all violent and irregular proceedings, when we consider, *That Christ will extract good out of such evil, and turn such things to his own Glory, and the good of such as are sincere.* I say, having endeavoured the proof of these things, that the plainest Truths of the Gospel ought not to be inforced upon men, much less those more doubtful and obscure, concerning Discipline and Order [of the obscurity of which there needs no other evidence, than that the holiest, wisest, and most impartial men have in all Ages differed about them] How may we lament over the present Imposition of the Ceremonies, now enjoyned amongst us in *England*, which are no part of Divine Truth, nor any of Christs Institutions, but things perfectly Humane in their creation, and yet are enforced by the Civil Power upon the practice and Consciences of men. If Christ did not appoint his own Laws to be inforced upon the Church, but to be received and executed by the influence and operating power of the Holy Ghost, concurring with them; How little pleased will he be to have Laws and Rules made by others, to be so inforced? If it be neither reasonable nor warrantable for a Magistrate to inforce the Truths of the Gospel in his own sense of them, How much less is it so to enjoyn things in the Worship of God, wholly framed by men, and of their devising? Those, as being Divine, are in their own nature infallible and certainly true. These as being Humane, are lyable to all Error and Mistake. How unmerciful a thing is it, and how unlike the Primitive Christians, to make such Ceremonies a Rule of the Churches Communion, which used to be nothing but the Creed? That a man now only out of Conscience to God, and without a just imputation of either Faction or Folly, or any other designed end, may very well become a *Non-Conformist* to these present imposed Ceremonies, hath been often evinced.

These things may afford us some prospect into those grounds upon which Liberty of Conscience ought to be asserted, and also the due and natural bounds of it. When men discoursing of this Subject, are enu-

merating what parties may be tolerated, and what not. What Fundamentals are necessary to be believed, to make a man a capable Subject of this Liberty, and how far the punishment is to be inflicted upon men for matters of this Nature, are to proceed, and where to be terminated; they do but lose themselves, and come to be involved with inextricable inconveniences, and do usually little more than discover their own particular inclinations and interests; and at last often end in this Determination, *That none are fit to be Indulged, but such as are punctually of their own belief and perswasion.* The general Laws of Nature, and the general Laws of the Gospel, are the best Umpire in this Case: As the first renders it a thing unreasonable, so the other makes it unlawful to tolerate any thing upon any pretence against the common Light, and the common Interest, and natural good of mankind. And so on the other hand, 'tis equally as unreasonable and as unlawful, to force men about things wholly Supernatural and purely Spiritual; and so are all the matters of the Gospel, which lie seated in mens Belief and Perswasion, in reference to their own Eternal Condition: and as they have no proper relation to Humane Concerns, so they are in *Aliena republica*, and are only cognisable there, and only to be dealt with by such Spiritual means and punishments, as Christ in the Gospel hath appointed for that end.

Hear the Opinion of the Learned *Alsted*, on this Subject at large: *De pace Religionis (ut vocant) seu de Libertate Religionis, seu de bono Autonomiæ: An & quatenus concedi possit a pio Magistratu.* Concerning Liberty of Religion, and how far it may be granted by a pious Magistrate, he saith, *That though the Magistrate be to defend but one Religion, even that which he judges to be the Truth by the Word of God, yet none ought to be compelled to that by outward force, but every mans Conscience to be left at Liberty. Et nonnunquam diversarum Religionum exercitium, si non publicum, saltem privatum, aut clandestinum ex singularibus causis permittendum esse statuimus; Atque hoc demum sensit pacem, & concordiam externam seu politiam inter Orthodoxos & non Orthodoxos, sæpe etiam Hereticos simul colendam, ab ipso pio Magistratu procurari, & posse & debere existimamus.* And he gives these three following Reasons for his Judgement.

Primo nititur generalibus illis Scripturæ dictis, quæ justitiam, & charitatem, studiumque pacis & concordiæ sæpè nobis omnibus commendant: & nè quid aliter adversus proximum statuamus, quàm qualiter nobiscum agi vellemus diserte præcipiunt. Denique ut conscientiis suam libertatem concedamus, & dissentientes in negotio Religionis amicè toleremus, omninò mandant. Mat. 5. 7. Rom. 12. 14. *& alibi.*

Secunda

Secunda petitur ab exemplis ſapientium & piorum Regum, tum in veteri, tum in novo Teſtamento, &c.

Tertia ab ipſa naturali Equitate, itemque adjuncta utilitate, quam etiam experientia quotidiana ferè comprobat. Nam præterquam quod æquiſſimum eſt, in cauſâ Religionis ab omni vi & coactione externâ abſtinere, ipſis etiam rebus publicis ut ita fiat, omninò expedit, atque conducit; quippe quæ alioqui facillimè turbarentur, ut inteſtinis bellis, ac mutuis lanienis tandem concíderent: prout hactenus in multis Europæ provinciis, Galliâ præſertim & Belgio, accidiſſe novimus. Cum contrà in Germania, Helvetia, Polonia, & alibi locorum, in quibus Religionum libertas hactenus indulta fuit, iſtis diſcordiis & lanienis non fuerit locus. Ergo reſipſa per ſe licita, & bona eſt, etiam ſi per accidens abuſus aliquis accidere poſſit. Alſt. de Eccl. Lib. 4. Cap. 14.

What can be ſaid with more truth and ſoberneſs about this matter?

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE,

The Magistrates Interest:

OR,

To grant *Liberty of Conscience* to persons of *different perswasions* in matters of *Religion*, is the great Interest of all Kingdoms and States, and particularly of *England*; Asserted and proved.

HAving thus far considered those things, which do most immediately reflect upon the Magistrates Duty, in allowing a due Liberty to each mans Conscience, We will in the next place consider, how far his Interest engages him this way. That 'tis the great Interest of all Protestant States, and particularly of *England*, To give Liberty to men of differing Apprehensions in the *Protestant Religion*, is evident; if we consider, That a Prince or State, by imposing the Principles of any one party in Religion, makes himself of that party, and engages all the rest against him. 'Tis no way prudent for a *Prince*, when his Subjects consist of many differing Judgments, to resolve to have them all of one mind, (a thing impracticable) or else to be their declared Enemy and Persecutor; 'tis a ready way to interrupt his own quiet and repose, without any other effect: for he will never by force and violence unite them in one Opinion, those differences will rather be fomented, and all animosities arising thereupon, and men rather fixed and confirmed by such Persecution, than any way removed from their Principles by it. 'Tis not the having several parties in Religion under a State, that is in it self dangerous, but 'tis the persecuting of them that makes them so. First, It puts them all under discontent, and then unites them together in such discontent; *Thuanus*, a wise States-man, saith, *Heretici, qui pace datâ factionibus franguntur, persecutione uniuntur contra Rem Publicam.* Those who in their Principles largely differ from each other, when they come to be all bound up together in one common Volumn, and linked in the same chain

chain of Perſecution and ſuffering, will be ſure to twiſt themſelves into an united Oppoſition, to ſuch an undiſtinguiſhing ſeverity: Whereas the thing in it ſelf rightly conſidered, So many divided Intereſts and Parties in Religion, are much leſs dangerous than any, and may be prudently managed to ballance each other, and to become generally more ſafe, and uſeful to a State, than any united party or intereſt whatever. He that is ſuffered to enjoy, under a State, the freedom of his Religion, when differing from the publick Profeſſion, has not only the common tye of a Subject upon him, for his protection as a man, but the cumulative obligation, and thanks to pay for his Indulgence as a Chriſtian under ſuch a Character. Subjects in ſuch a poſture, as they will ever be ſtudious of an opportunity to teſtifie their grateful fidelity, and by ſome eminent ſervice to lay up a ſtock of Merit, that may ſecure their future quiet; ſo they will be, of any, moſt careful not to forfeit ſo pleaſing an Indulgence, by falling under a publick diſpleaſure. A Prince in ſuch a ſtate of things, by making himſelf a common Father to the whole Proteſtant Religion, though made up of ſome differences within it ſelf, will be ſecured not only of that common Homage of Obedience and Subjection, but with it, that more noble, of the Hearts and Affections of all his Proteſtant Subjects. To ſay any party in Religion is diſaffected to a State, and therefore not fit for ſuch favour, when ſuch diſaffection, if it be, does plainly ariſe from the Severity of the State againſt them, in that caſe; the reaſon why favour ſhould not be ſhew'd, is remov'd by ſhowing of it: For, as perſecuting men for their Religion, muſt neceſſarily diſguſt them; ſo giving them the freedom of it, muſt needs equally oblige them. 'Tis no true meaſure to take of any parties in Religion, to ſay the one are better Subjects than the other, when the one are favoured and countenanced, and the other ſtill kept under and oppreſſed; There is no reaſon, but to believe, there is an equal Tendency in all, to love that Prince or State, where they find favour and protection; 'tis a common diſpoſition runs in the blood of all men; and by how much the Principles of any party are leſs taking and plauſible, the leſs dangerous ſtill is that party; and as they will need favour more than others, ſo they muſt needs lye proportionably ſecured to a State, by the Obligation is put upon them.

Take it for Truth, which is commonly affirmed, *That all ſuch for whom Liberty is at any time deſired, are men full of Faction and full of Error*: For the firſt, 'tis certain, *Perſecution* will not only continue, but foment ſuch Faction, and give it a plauſible pretence to juſtifie it ſelf upon; whereas a Liberty granted in matters of Conſcience, will either wholly win ſuch men to a due and hearty Obedience, as finding them-

themselves in a posture they cannot expect to mend, or else will lay them open to such apparent justice for punishment, and bring them under such a general contempt, as shall leave them strip'd of all pretensions, and render them wholly inconsiderable. 'Tis marvellous prudence to separate between *Conscience* and *Faction*, which can never be, but by a Liberty of the one, that so they may distinctly punish the other: He that hath liberty granted to worship God according to his Conscience, and yet is not satisfied, but continues troublesom, makes every body ready to be his Executioner, and makes that discovery which could never have been made before; that Faction was his end, and Conscience but the pretended means; such men will not only lie open to the States just severity, but to the hatred of all men who do generally dislike ill actions most, when they come from men of the best pretentions.

Punish men for their Religion, because you judge them Factions, and mix all together, and you fall into this double errour; Either you punish men for Faction, that deserve it not, and so, besides a piece of injustice, do what you can to make those Enemies who are not, nor would not be so; or else those that are so, you give them the pretence of Conscience to justifie themselves in whatever sufferings comes upon them. When people differing from the publick Religion meet to worship God, and are seized and punished for so doing, the Magistrate saith, *He punisheth for Faction*; they say, *They suffer for Religion*. And all people who see the actuall punishment inflicted, for things relating to Conscience and Religion, will be sure to believe and pitty them, and be ready to condemn the State. A due Separation, as 'tis best to be made, so 'twill, only by a Liberty given, be obtained. He that intends nothing but to give God the Homage of his Conscience, will have freedom to do it; and he that under that has other ends and aims, will be justly punished for it: But for a State to imbibe a general belief, that all who differ from the State-Religion, are factious to the Civil Power, and not to be suffered, and so to punish them as such, and if they be not so, to tempt them thereby to be so, is to do an act of injustice to them, and to forfeit their own prudence towards themselves.

For the errours you may suppose men possessed withal; as an eager Persecution is apt to make the Professors of them, think them more than ordinary Truths, and themselves some great men in maintaining them; so it makes others seek after that, when driven into a Corner, which were it in the open streets, no man would regard. He that preaches and

and writes under restraint, that restraint begets him readers and hearers, that would else pass through the World with very little notice taken of him; things difficult and hard to be come by, carry some weight in mens expectancy: Foolish and absurd Opinions are only put to Nurse by Persecution, and by that made to have something in the concerns and fears of others, which has indeed nothing in it self. The hiding men by a keen pursuit after them, in the profession of such things, keeps them alive; whereas if they were openly preached, written, and discoursed of, the folly of them would appear such, as not only others, but the men themselves would be ashamed and aweary of them: Besides, punishing men for Religion, where there are several parties, laies a Foundation of endless troubles, and perpetual feuds: for that ill Opinion and anger, which makes one party, when prevailing to suppress and punish the rest, propagates still the same anger and dislike in the parties punished, and begets, by such provocation, a certain resolution to retort the same again, and a readiness to embrace all opportunities to effect it; whereas that party that once gives liberty to the rest, buries all those evils, and unites all in the common union of their own interest and security. 'Twill be impossible to find out a way for men of differing Judgments in Religion, to live together, and enjoy the common advantages, which as men they may afford one to another; unless they exercise an Indulgence to each other, in that variety they stand in as Christians. Where there are many differences, and a State denies any Liberty, but strictly imposeth the State-Religion upon all, the case alwayes falls out to be, that the earnest desire of that we call *Liberty of Conscience*, lies glowing in the Embers of mens discontent, and is a thing in it self so popular, a thing of so great evidence of Reason, when it may be discoursed upon equal terms, and so much the concern of every man, but the present Imposer, that 'tis very apt to kindle and flame out, and upon any strait or emergency of State, either by Forreign War, or Domestick Division, to make such an Earthquake, as may endanger the whole; 'Tis most prudent in a State to give Liberty, when there is least power to demand it; those may be gained by giving it, that may prove dangerous in forcing it: to force and pen men up in such things is wholly unnatural, and will, like Wind penn'd up in the Earth, or the Sea, shut up by Banks, break out at one time or another with the greater violence. Liberty in Religion was never yet denied in a *Protestant State*, but it had first or last a *mischievous effect*; to instruct men in *Protestant Principles*, and then to put a Yoke of *Uniformity* upon them, hath no more proportion in it, than to educate a man at *Geneva*,

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that is to live at *Rome*, and to breed him a *Calviniſt*, whom you intend for a *Papiſt*.

Were there no other reaſon to make a *Prince* or a *State* out of love with puniſhing men for Religion, and matters of that nature, this were ſufficient, To conſider ſuch puniſhment ever falls upon the moſt honeſt of his Subjects in every differing party; men of looſe jugling principles, and unſound hearts, will be ſure to eſcape the Net; only the ſincere plain-hearted man, that cannot diſſemble, is caught; 'twas the deviſe againſt *Daniel* heretofore, They knew, in the matters of his God, 'twas eaſie to deal with him, becauſe in thoſe he would not upon any terms diſſemble.

This has Three ill Effects alwayes attending it.

Firſt, It diſobliges the beſt ſort of men in every party, whom the State ſhould moſt cheriſh and engage; what ever is ſaid to the contrary, thoſe that are the trueſt Subjects to the Great King, will be alſo found the beſt to his Vice-gerents here: 'Tis a ſtrange Heterodox kind of policy, to make all the honeſt, ſincere men in a Nation, of every party, but that one the State adheres to, the object of the States diſpleaſure, and to make Laws that can have no other effect, but their Suffering.

Secondly, All ſtanders-by, the generality of a Nation looking on, muſt needs be diſ-ſatisfied, to ſee a plain honeſt man, upright and punctual in all his dealings amongſt men, puniſhed meerly for his Conſcience to God; and becauſe he will not comply to ſave himſelf, which nothing but his Conſcience can lead him to, and by parting with which, he may at any time purchaſe his quiet; in ſuch a caſe common Ingenuity begets pity for him, if not *Proſelytes* to him, and great diſlike of the courſe taken with him.

Thirdly, Though it be a ſecret, yet 'tis a very ſure and certain way of bringing *National Judgments* upon a *People*; no doubt God takes great notice of the puniſhing men, meerly becauſe they are true to him; for ſo every man is, that is true to his Conſcience, though it be erroneous. Upon no other account was it that *Paul* juſtified himſelf before the High-Prieſt, in ſaying, *He had walked before God in all good Conſcience to that time.* His meaning was, He had gone according to his light, as a thing pleaſing to God, though otherwiſe, as to the matter, his Conſcience was erroneous, and his Judgment miſ-informed. And he tells us afterwards, *That he obtained Mercy from God*, becauſe what he did againſt the Church, was done Ignorantly, and in purſuance of the beſt Light he then had.

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The punishing men meerly for following the pure dictates of Conscience, is no doubt the true cause of many National miseries; And a State should be careful to avoid this, as they would preserve their own Safety and Welfare. If we look into that which naturally occasioneth several Opinions in Religion, 'tis that which a Prince should for his own Interest highly encourage, and that is Knowledge; for no doubt, as Knowledge encreaseth, it expatiates it self into variety of Thoughts and Principles, and as it enlargeth all other Sciences, so Religion. Knowledge is the Glory of a Nation, and that by which all matters of Concern to it, as War, Trade, Policy, and every thing else is highly enlarged. 'Tis the high Honour of a Prince to Govern a Wise and a Knowing People, as well as a Great People; 'Tis an impotent piece of Policy, and equally destructive to all publick Interest, to say *Subjects must be kept ignorant*, as to say, *They must be kept poor*. They are Maximes only fitted for a Tyrant, and such who only govern for themselves, and calculate all Interests, as they concenter in their own, and by so doing, make themselves their own Idols. Nothing damps all Noble Undertakings amongst men of Conscience, like Imposition in Religion; it makes them hang down their Heads, it makes them heartless in their Callings. If they are denyed freedom in Religion, men of Confcience will care little for any thing else. *Solomon* tells us, *A wounded Spirit no man can bear*. He that carries a taint of trouble in his mind about these things, is impotent in every thing; 'tis Liberty in Religion that breeds the noble and generous minds. Let a man know his duty to God, and have freedom to perform it, and that man will have Wisdom and Courage above any man. Imposing Religion upon men has never other effect, than either to lull men asleep into implicite ignorance, and so make them as sottish and useless Members of a State, as they are of the Church; or else, where it meets with Knowledge and Integrity, sinks men under the greatest grief, and provokes them to the greatest dissatisfaction. If we look amongst our selves, Who be they that desire favour in this particular? And who be they that will be gratified and engaged by it, but every where men of Religious Principles? And are they not generally the sober and serious men, that bring good to a Nation? Are not they in all Callings and Trades, generally most industrious, and thriving? Are not they most saving in their Expences, and every way, either in War or Peace, most useful and serviceable? 'Tis debauched, loose, expensive people that over-live their Estates, and neglect their Callings, that help to pull a State down. Such men will be sure to Conform to any thing,

that secures them in present Luxury; 'tis the Sober, Serious, Religious sort of men that every way make a Nation prosperous; to discontent such, and to put them into one common Dungeon of Imputed Faction, and actual Persecution, will never be found any right measure of a true National Interest.

Several things with great Evidence, seem to plead for Moderation and Indulgence here in *England*.

First, The Number and Quantity of those concerned, as well as the Quality, is such, that it can be no way prudent to discontent them, upon that which will no way compensate the inconvenience; there can be no good Policy to leave so many men mixed every where, even in the highest places of the Nation, under dissatisfaction, without the least effect, but the reproach of imprudence in doing it; and to put a disgraceful distinguishing Character upon them, as men unfaithful to the State, only because they cannot comply with some Ceremonies (as the case is general amongst us) and worship God just in the publick way, a thing of no more intrinsick concern to the State, than to have all men of the same opinion in a disputed point of Philosophy, and a thing of as equal likelihood to be attain'd. A Subject that gives the same testimony of his Fidelity to his Prince that others do, and behaves himself in all Civil Concerns, as a faithful and profitable Member of the Commonwealth, and yet is looked upon as a publick enemy, and made the object of publick anger, because he cannot in every Circumstance comply with the publick Religion, is without doubt very severely and impolitickly dealt with. As every Subject hath an Interest in his Natural Prince, so hath the Prince in every Subject, and should be like the true Mother that would by no means divide the Child. To take such a course, is to furnish out a party ready, for whoever first makes a disturbance; nay, it's to tempt men so to do, by seeing a party so prepared.

Let *Liberty of Conscience* be once fitly given, and the root of all mens hopes and pretensions, that desire publick mischief, is pulled up, and the King will be the greatest and the most beloved Prince that ever yet sate upon the Throne.

Secondly, We shall never have a flourishing Trade without it.

First, Because the pressure in these things falls generally more upon the Trading-sort of men, than any in the Nation; we may see it in the great City, and in all Corporations: It makes many give over Trading, and retire; It makes others remove into *Holland*, and other Forreign parts; as it did heretofore from *Norwich*, to the irrecove-

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rable prejudice of our Cloathing-Trade upon the like occasion; And it certainly prevents all *Protestant Strangers* to come to live and trade amongst us. It puts great Advantages into the hands of the *Hollander* every way, who have not a better Friend in *Europe* than *Uniformity* in *England*. As *Liberty of Conscience* here, is that they fear above any thing, so it would insensibly more weaken them than all the Victories we have obtained over them.

Secondly, Men will never trade freely, where they do not live and converse freely; Where a man is afraid to be watch'd to a Conventicle, and most of the time he serves God, is fain to hide himself; No man will chuse to live so if he can avoid it; every man that cannot conform to the publick Religion, lying under the lash of the Law, will prudently shun both Business and Company, will never lay out his Estate where 'tis in any mans power to do him a mischief. A man conscious to himself that he cannot comply with the Law, will avoid medling with any thing, and choose privacy as his best security. This we have had a sufficient demonstration of in the *Papists*, who for many years, ever since they lay under the lash of the penal Laws, have been of little use to the Nation, have retreated from all publick Commerce amongst us, kept their Money by them, sent their Children abroad, and disjoyned themselves from all the publick Concerns of the Kingdom.

Thirdly, 'Tis the King of *England*'s true Interest to become Head of all the *Protestant* party in the World; and he will never do that, but by first making himself a common Father to all his *Protestant* Subjects at home. That 'tis his Interest to head the *Protestant* party abroad, is plain; because being the greatest and most powerful of all *Protestant* Princes and States, he will necessarily draw them into a dependance upon him, and desire of Protection from him; by which not only the *Protestant* Interest in it self will be much secured, by being so united and conjoyned, but the King of *England* also will receive a great Accession of Power, by the Influence he will have on so great a part of *Christendom*; which he may make use of, not only to secure the *Protestant* Religion against the common Enemy of it, but to advantage himself every way, by the great respect and interest he will have in all *Protestant* States.

To bring the *Protestants* into an Union amongst themselves, will be of advantage to every *Protestant*-State, but to none so much as *England*: First, Because *England* naturally becomes the Head of such a Union; and secondly, Because the Designs and Practices of the *Po-*

Popish party ever since the Reformation, have lain, and will lie more united against *England* than any *Protestant*-State, as supposing that the chief Support of all the rest; and therefore *England* can never be truely safe, nor secured in its proper Interest, but when 'tis inviron'd with all *Protestant*-States adhering to it, and depending upon it. How sadly *England* has miscarried, when it has espoused any other collateral Interest but the *Protestant*, hath been too obvious ever since the first Reformation: *England* has been alwayes greatest at home, when it has been the greatest Defender of the *Protestant* Faith abroad. Now if the King will thus rightly state his Interest abroad, he must begin the work at home; if he persecute and keep under any of his *Protestant* Subjects at home, those of their Opinion abroad will never put themselves under his protection: As he must make no distinction in *Christendom*, but *Protestant* and *Papist*, so he must make no other amongst his Subjects at home. He that imposeth any one Opinion amongst *Protestants*, and will tolerate no other, makes the distinction to be still between *Protestant* and *Protestant*, and makes himself but Head of a Party amongst them, and will never so head the *Protestant* Interest, as to oppose the *Popish* party with it, or unite the *Protestants* so under him, as to make them acknowledge him for their Head.

Who ever would be Head of all the *Protestant* Interest, must have no common Enemy but *Popery*, and concenter all there: Imposing Conformity to the Opinion of any one *Protestant* party, upon all the rest, is but to make himself so much the weaker by every dissenter, and is indeed totally destructive to the very being of such a thing.

First, Liberty of Conscience is the best way to secure us to the Protestant Faith, and to prevent a relapse to Popery; the Protestant Religion will be fastest rooted, by exerting fully the Principles of it, and a throughout adhering to them: By our practice in dealing one with another, to deny those Principles by which we justifie our Separation from *Rome*, is the ready way to make them return thither again. *Teach men, that there is no man, nor men under any one denomination since the Apostles times, that are infallible, in delivering Divine Truth. Teach men, that the Scripture is the only Rule of Religion, and let them read it: Tell them, they are to follow no men, farther than they follow that Rule; and that every man is Judge according to the best Light he hath of that Rule, and how far other men comply with it, and differ from it: And that every man is bound to behave himself towards God, according to the Judgment he shall so make within himself*; all which are Protestant Prin-

Principles, and Eternal Truths. And then collect the sense which these Principles issue themselves into; and how unreasonable will it then appear to force men to comply with the belief of others, contrary to their own? and when you have bid them use their Light and Reason to publish them, because they will not oppose it, and go against it? How can we otherwise justifie forcing men, where such principles are avowed, but by a flat denyal of them, and recurring to those Popish Weapons of the absolute Power of the Church, and her uncontroulable Authority? and so by condemning others, that upon the exercise of their own Light and Reason now differ from us, condemn our selves, who upon the same at first departed from *Rome*? When we oppose the Church of *Rome*, we justifie our selves upon the very same Arguments, by which dissenters now amongst our selves make their defence against us; and when we dispute against them, we take up the same Arguments the Papists use against us: There is scarce any considerable Argument urged of late for Conformity, and Imposition, but if you trace it to the Seat, you shall find it in *Bellarmine* or *Suarez*. The truth is, He that cannot indure to have any differ from him in Opinion, about the supernatural Truth of the Gospel, and will have no Toleration of several perswasions of that kind; and thinks it destructive to mankind, and the being of every State, to suffer any so to be; That man is a Protestant by mistake, and will find himself at home in his Principles no where but at *Rome*. The farther we remove in our Reformation from the Practices and Principles of the Church of *Rome*, and live upon our own, the less like we are to return to it. If we make use of their Arguments and Principles at one time, we may come to use them at another, and at last espouse them altogether; and what serves our turns at some times to oppose others, may at last prevail upon our selves. And so it is in our Practices, reserving any of their Ceremonies, may at last bring us to some of their Doctrines: He that keeps a Holiday, is within a step of praying to that Saint for whose sake he keeps it, especially if he have the wit to consider why he keeps it. He that kneels and puts weight upon it, is in a fair way to adoration; and he that is for joyning the Cross with Baptism, may come to do it after Grace, and cross himself in time. 'Twas Bishop *Bonners* observation, when he saw the Reformation, and how many of the Popish Ceremonies were retained, being asked, what he thought of it? *If they like* (saith he) *the taste of our Broth so well, they will eat of our Beef shortly.*

Secondly, Liberty of Conscience is the great means to diffuse Gospel-

spel-knowledge in divine things, and that's the best and surest way to bar out Popery, and lock the door upon it for ever. Ignorance is the great and only preparative for implicite subjection. *Christendom* cannot (I dare say) afford an instance that ever any State or People, where Divine Knowledge by Liberty of Conscience, and a Liberty for the Gospel was once spread, were in the least danger of turning Apostates to *Popery*, but have grown daily more and more into a detestation of it, and generally almost every man amongst them carrying a Weapon in his understanding to defend the *Protestant* Cause.

Were Liberty of Conscience granted in *Italy* and other *Popish* States, we should soon see the Mitre totter upon the Popes head, and probably see as fair Churches there, as in any other part of *Europe*. 'Twas observed in the Wars of the *Low-Countries*, that when ever any *Catholick* began to look into the Bible, he was not long-liv'd in the *Roman Profession*.

Thirdly, Liberty of Conscience will breed men up with an irreconcilable dislike to all Imposition in Religion and Conscience, and so unite them in a general abhorrence of *Popery*, as the grand Mother and Author of it all *Christendom* over: All Principles and Parties born from a Liberty given in Religion, have an Antipathy in them to that *Romish Yoke*, and do naturally unite against the *Popish Religion*, as the grand and common Enemy of them all.

Let Liberty of Conscience once be given in a *Protestant*-State, and though there be never so many differences amongst themselves, yet men of all perswasions will concenter in that. He that has the freedom of his Religion, will be concerned to defend it, and look upon *Popery* as the great Giant he is in danger of. Experience and Fact, the best of all demonstrations, do evidence this. Take a view of those places, where Liberty of Conscience hath been most given, and you will find there the greatest aversion to *Popery* that is in any parts of *Christendome*.

'Tis in other places, where other Methods of Imposition and Persecution are used, that complyance with *Popery* hath been attempted, and projects set on foot to compound the *Protestant* and the *Papist* into an Agreement.

'Tis Imposition in Religion sweeps the House, and keeps the Nest warm for *Popery*: Liberty of Conscience mortally stabs it; where that is once given, it may be said to the Pope, as it was to *Belshazzar*, *God hath numbred thy Kingdom, and finished it; and the place where he once tyrannized, shall know him there no more.*

Lastly,

Lastly, If the Church of *Rome* understand their own Interest, as we have good reason to believe they do, this Case is determined to our hands: for upon every occasion since the Reformation, both in *Germany*, *France*, *Switzerland*, and all places where Liberty of Conscience hath been endeavoured, the Popes have *toto animo*, every way opposed it, and declared it a thing perfectly destructive to the Church: and such, as where-ever it was suffered, would destroy the *Roman* Faith; and in that Maxime, I believe their Infallibility is not much to be denyed. Some are so much otherwise-minded, that they believe Liberty of Conscience will be the ready means to induce *Popery* again amongst us; The Reasons of it seem invisible, unless it be done by some new Rule of contraries: it must either come to pass by giving Liberty in general to *Protestants* of differing perswasions, or else by giving Liberty to the *Papists* themselves, as included in a general Liberty.

For the first (I hope) it appears evidently to have another tendency.

And for the second, The giving Liberty to the Papists themselves amongst us, no man well informed, can imagine that they should be included in any such Liberty.

First, Because in their practice amongst us, they refuse to give that publick assurance, every Subject ought to give of his fidelity that expects the favour due to a Subject.

And secondly, Because their Principles are such, That if they understand their own Religion, they can never be good Subjects to any Protestant State: He that knows not this, knows not the Roman Religion. And to prove it so by facts;

Amongst very many other Instances, let what was done here in the time of Queen *Elizabeth* to her, and at the same time in *France* to *Henry* the Fourth, for ever lie upon Record against them. Nor can a Papist ever become a true and hearty Subject to a Protestant Prince, but by that act he ceaseth to be so. And as common justice does deny them all pretentions to Liberty, so common equity opposeth them; for as both they and their Religion abhor giving Liberty to any but themselves, so is their practice accordingly; for they never give Liberty to a Soul living, that differs from them, where they are able and dare deny it.

To say, That Liberty of Conscience can have no other effect, but to tolerate damnable Heresies, and all kind of Sectaries, which is the usual way of discoursing it; and so to enlarge into all kind of Satyrical Rhetorick upon that Topick, is to put a Bears skin upon it, and then

to

to bait it. 'Twill be to impose a thing of a very hard belief upon me, to say, That Truth never gaines by Liberty, and that the Imposer is alwayes in the right, and the Sufferer in the wrong; especially considering, he that thinks me an Heretick, another thinks him so, and a fourth thinks us all so; and all the while we are all of us weak, imperfect, fallible men, sitting in judgment, and sentencing one another: And there can be no other end of it, but that he that is strongest, makes himself in the right, and destroys the rest. When ever Truth comes to suffer by Imposition, as many times it does, and comes afterwards to be so acknowledged, the evil of such Imposition carries its own evidence. But suppose such Truth never gets any good, and Liberty should be only to men under Errors and Mistakes, 'twere not fit then to deny it; that is, 'twere not fit then to impose upon them; for Liberty is nothing but a Negative upon Force and Imposition: If we consult the good of such men themselves, so lapsed into Error, and desire their Conversion, Force and Imposition is no way to it; If we consult our own Security, there is no danger at all can come by it; for as long as such errors lye in the understanding, and are only conversant about supernatural things, they have no reference at all to the being or well-being of Mankind, as such: What hurt does an Error in Religion do me in my Neighbour, that is otherwise an honest and good man? He is rather in that an object of my pity, and instruction, than of my anger.

If we desire to have all men of our Opinion, because we think we are in the right, 'tis a very commendable thing; and if we do it with such a publick Charity, we shall use only such Christian means, as naturally conduce to bring it about. But, if through the pride of mens hearts, and the intention of their own exaltation thereby, they will have every body of their Opinion; and because they cannot convince and perswade them, will therefore force them, and trample upon them, that's an odious superintendency.

To say, That upon a prudential Account, Liberty should never be allow'd in State, because 'tis that which will unite Parties, and bring them to a Consistency amongst themselves, and so render them much more dangerous; is to say a thing upon a great mistake. For common experience shews us, That nothing unites parties more amongst themselves, than a hot Persecution; for does any thing bring them so much together as that? 'tis like a great Storm, that drives Cattel, that are scattered about, altogether, and brings them to meet in one common shelter to save themselves.

[*Ridley*

Kidly and *Hooper* agreed in the Goale, that would hardly have disputed themselves Friends.

There is no bond of union amongst disagreeing Persons, like Persecution; the common concern of their Security then begets Correspondency, Acquaintance, and such Intercourse and mutual Assistance, as endears them above any thing one to another. And for the danger there may be of any party, there is nothing sure so like to remove that, as Indulging them with a Liberty: the best way to be secured against the discontent of any party, is to remove the cause of such discontent; and the best way to be out of fear of them, unless you can totally destroy them, is to oblige them, and so at once to engage and win them over, and thereby disband our own fears.

A late Author tells us with particular remark, That *Mæcenas* heretofore gave Advice to *Augustus*, *That upon no terms he should endure such, who would bring in any strange Worship into the State.* I believe it, and 'twas such kind of Advice (no doubt) that caused the ten first Persecutions.

Methinks the Author should have remembered, that that Advice would have kept Christianity out of the World: For, if we follow the track of such Policy, we shall find, that what we now say against Tolerating Dissenters amongst our selves, The Papists first said, and do still say against us all; and if we go one step higher, the Heathens said the very same against the Christian Religion it self, and thought it a Factious, Fanatick project of sick-brain'd men, and a thing not to be endured, that men should not content themselves with the same Gods that the rest of the World worshipped and equiesced in. 'Tis a sad thing and much to be lamented, That the Protestants should take up the dregs of those Politicks, and make use of them one against another, upon every small difference amongst themselves.

The same Author, in another part of his Book, propound this question,

If divers wayes of Worship (saith he) *be allowed in a Nation, what shall a Prince do? If he keep any men of any Profession or Party out of employment for their Opinion sake, he disobliges that party; If he bring all men indifferently alike into imployment, if he be of any party himself, he will disoblige his own party, who will expect preheminence in that kind, and so in conclusion, by endeavouring to please all, he will lose all.*

This is a knot very easily untied. I will suppose a Prince strict in the profession and practice of what he thinks is the Truth; and the more strict personally he is, the greater will the favour of Indulgence appear

to those that differ from him; but there is no necessity, that he should make a party of those, who are of his Opinion, distinct from the rest of his Subjects; 'tis below his Greatness, and besides his Interest so to do; they will soon become like the sons of *Zerviah*, and in time grow to be too hard for him: Those that are of his Opinion, he may think them, in his private judgment, better *Christians* than others; but there is no policy so to distinguish them, as if they were thereby better Subjects than others.

All men in a State are to give one common Assurance of their Fidelity, and such who are allowed a Liberty in their Religion, when differing from the Publick Profession; the Political end of it is, to make them good Subjects; and the end of that must needs be, to make them serviceable to their Prince: and there is no reason to doubt, but that they will be so, and eminently so, because they lie under an Obligation to his Favour, those of his own Opinion are not capable of. A Prince should seat himself in his Throne with an equal political aspect to all his Subjects, and imploy them as their fitness for his service qualifies them: There is no reason to narrow and limit a Prince to any party, or to let any Party grow into such a predominant Opinion, as if the Prince were confined to them.

No mans bare Opinion in such things should qualifie him for an imployment, nor no mans Opinion ought to put a Negative upon him in that kind; that is for a Prince, after he has obliged all his Subjects to him, to lose the use of a great part of them. Let a Prince but chuse men to serve him, whose Ability and Fitness carries the evidence of his Choice, and other Exceptions will soon vanish. 'Tis below the Greatness of a Prince, to have any Subject to pretend to employment upon any score but his judgment of his fitness for it.

The King of *France* hath often with good success employed his Protestant Subjects; Nay, has often trusted the Command of his whole Army in the hand of the *Protestant*, and yet feared not the disobliging of the *Popish* party, or being thought a man of no Religion for so doing. 'Tis a most absurd and impolitick thing, because men differ in some divine supernatural things, to put them under such characters, as to make them unuseful one to another in all other humane things.

Let a Prince once give Liberty of Conscience, and he obliges all parties to him, and makes them wholly depend upon him; the tenure of their Liberty will be a tenure *in Capite*, and *Quamdiu se bene gesserint*; and for imploying men, and dispensing favours to them, let all Parties with a due subjection lie under the Prerogative and Soveraignty of his pleasure.

Two

Two things are with much earneſtneſs uſually Objected againſt the grant of Liberty;

First.

That it is unbecoming the Zeal and Concern a Magiſtrate ſhould have for the Truth of Religion, to give Liberty to anything but what he thinks to be ſo, and that ſuch a Lukewarmneſs, as Liberty to ſeveral Opinions ſuppoſeth, does no way become him.

Secondly.

That giving Liberty to men of ſeveral Opinions, is the way to propagate and encreaſe them, and is of great danger to a State.

For the Firſt.

It is very fit that the Magiſtrate ſhould eſpouſe what he thinks to be the Truth, and keep himſelf to the ſtrict practice of it, and uſe all lawful means to poſſeſs others with it; let him uſe all the means Chriſt and the Apoſtles uſed to convince and convert men; but let him not lay violent hands upon mens perſons, becauſe he cannot ſatisfie their underſtandings; that's Zeal without Knowledge, and Religion without a Rule, either in Reaſon or Divinity: That is to run into ſo wide an extream from *Laodecean* Lukewarmneſs, as to become like *Paul* before his converſion, who ſaith of himſelf, *That he was mad, perſecuting the Church.*

To ſay a Magiſtrate is lukewarm in Religion, becauſe he will not force men to his Opinion, is to ſay, He is lukewarm, becauſe he will not do a thing that Chriſt hath no where required of him; and to do a thing, that is to no purpoſe to do, for that very end for which it is done.

Tolerating men has no more in it, than not forcing men; 'tis only a Negative favour, there is nothing Affirmative in it; a Magiſtrate will never be charged with Lukewarmneſs in Religion, that makes uſe of all Goſpel-means to promote Truth, and that he may do, and yet never violate the due Liberty of any man's Conſcience. If we conſult the ancient practice of the firſt Chriſtian Magiſtrates, we ſhall find it plain, That Liberty of Conſcience was given by the Chriſtian Emperors. *Conſtantine* did it fully. *Euſebius* in his Life tells us, that he made a Decree in theſe words, *Ut parem cum fidelibus, ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant.* 'Tis true, he baniſhed *Arrius*; but let any man conſult the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and he ſhall find *Arrius* ſo factious and baſe a perſon, that there needed no part of his Opinion to be the cauſe of his Exile. *Gratian* the Emperour make like-

wise a Decree for Liberty in Religion. The *Jews* had granted by all the Emperours, the same Rights with other Christians. *Jovinian* and *Valentinian*, most noble Princes, suffered Christians of several perswasions, to enjoy their Liberty: Of this, *Grotius* in his Book *De Imp. Sum. Potes. Circ. Sac. Cap.* 8. takes particular notice, adding these words, and saith he, which is more to be noted, *The Emperour did not only permit impunity to disagreeing Sects, but often made Laws to order their Assemblies.* Liberty therefore in Religion is not either so new, or so strange a thing, or so great a Monster, as men would make it. State-Religions are not alwayes infallibly true, Truth sometimes keeps men from embracing them, it does so in many parts of Christendom; and in that case a Negative Restraint upon the Magistrates compulsion, is the only shelter of Truth. The Wisdom of Christ, who hath forbid the use of the Temporal power under the Gospel, about Religion, hath left things best. For if a Magistrate be in the right, he may promote Truth, as far as in the nature of the thing, and by Christs appointment, it can be promoted; if he be not in the right, where the Temporal power does not interpose, men are secured in the profession of Truth, and not hazarded in refusing a publick error.

He that would have the Magistrate force all men to his Religion, will himself be burnt by his own Principles, when he comes into a Countrey, where the State-Religion differs from him: To say, He is in the right, and the State that does it in the wrong, is a miserable begging the Question. If one Magistrate be to do it, all are to do it, and there can be no other rule of Truth and Error in that case, but what they think so. If a Magistrate be once admitted to punish with death, what is really and truly in it self an Heresie, he may, and must by the same rule so punish every thing he thinks so; Where shall the definition of Heresie terminate, and who shall set the Magistrate bounds in such a case? Misinformation, passion, or some sinister Interest, can only lead men into such Principles, which tend to nothing, but to make Religion disturb the peace and quiet of all mankind; and as one saith well, *To bring Christians to a butchery one of another, and to make a meer Shambles of Christendom.*

For the second Objection.

That giving liberty to several parties, encreaseth them, and makes them dangerous to a State.

First, 'Tis very fit, that whereseoever you will suppose errors to be sprung up, all the means Christ hath appointed for that end, should be used to suppress them, and reclaim men from them; let their mouths

be

be ſtopped with ſound Doctrine, and ſpiritual Cenſures; the onely Queſtion is about the uſe of the Temporal-power in ſuch things: And experience tell us, That ſince the World began to this day, Principles and Opinions in the mind were never extinguiſhed by the puniſhing the body; That old ſaying verifies it,

Sanguis Martyrum, ſemen Eccleſiæ.

Nay, there is nothing under the Sun to promote an Opinion in Religion, like making men ſuffer for it; the conſtancy and courage of men in ſuffering for an Opinion, will ſooner perſwade men to it, than all the Diſcourſes and Sermons in the World.

If the Magiſtrate take a violent courſe to root out all different Opinions in Religion, ſuch as the Emperors heretofore, when Heathen, took with the Chriſtians, and the Popiſh States, where they are able, do at this day with the Proteſtants; beſides the cruelty of it, with which he will beſmear himſelf, he will miſs of his end, and find a ſucceſſion of thoſe Principles in others, riſing out of the Aſhes of thoſe deſtroyes, as it uſed to be ſaid heretofore by the Martirs,

Quoties morimur, toties naſcimur.

If he take a mild and more gentle way of perſecution, he only exaſperates them, and then leaves them armed with all poſſible diſcontent to hurt him.

Conſider the giving the Liberty under theſe two heads.

Firſt, The giving of it to ſeveral Opinions and Parties, where they are already actually exiſting.

And ſecondly, The giving liberty ſo, as will occaſion and produce ſuch Parties and Opinions.

For the firſt, Where there are ſeveral Parties in Religion already in being, and diffuſed all over a Nation, as the Caſe is with us, there is no way to ſecure them, but to indulge them, for they are by their number outgrown the political part of perſecution.

For the ſecond Conſideration of Liberty, the giving it ſo, as will naturally produce ſeveral Principles and Opinions in men, he that would prevent that, muſt give no Liberty to the Proteſtant Religion, muſt not let the Bible be read by the Vulgar: There is no way to keep out ſeveral Opinions in Religion, but an implicite ignorant ſubjection to an impoſed Infallibility, and to do as the *Turks* do, who will not have any Learning or Diſcourſe amongſt them of Religion, for that very Reaſon, becauſe they will have no Religion but *Mahomet*, nor no learning but the *Alcoran*; ſuch policy, to murder mens Souls, is hatched in Hell.

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The very Art of *Printing* was at the first thought dangerous, because it was looked on as a thing like to introduce several Opinions in Religion. Cardinal *Woolsey*, in a Letter of his to the Pope, hath this passage about it; *That his Holiness could not be ignorant what divers effects the new Invention of* Printing *had produced; for as it had brought in and restored Books and Learning, so together it hath been the occasion of these Sects and Schisms which daily appeared in the World, but chiefly in* Germany, *where men begin now to call in question the present faith and tenents of the Church, and to examine how far Religion is departed from its primitive Institution. And that which particularly was most to be Lamented, they had exhorted Lay and ordinary men to read the Scriptures, and to pray in their Vulgar tongue. That, if this were suffered, besides all other dangers, the common people at last might come to believe that there was not so much use of the Clergie; for if men were perswaded once they could make their own way to God, and that Prayers in their native and ordinary language might pierce Heaven, as well as in Latine, How much would the Authority of the Masse fall? how prejudicial might this prove unto all our Ecclesiastical Orders?* Lord *Herberts* Hist. of *Hen.* 8.

Liberty of Conscience lies as naturally neceſſary to a *Proteſtant* State as Impoſition to a *Popiſh* State; he muſt be a good Artiſt that can find a right middle-way between theſe two. 'Tis the glory of *Proteſtant* States to have much of the knowledge of God amongſt them, and that variety of mens Opinions, about ſome leſs weighty and more obſcure matters of Religion, as it much tends to a diſcovery of the Truth of them, ſo it no way breaks the Bond of *Proteſtant* Union, where men generally agree in the ſame Rule of Religion, and in all the chief and neceſſary Fundamentals of Salvation. Liberty of Conſcience in ſuch States, as it is their true and genuine Intereſt, and without which they will but deny themſelves thoſe advantages they might otherwiſe arrive at; ſo with the forementioned *Boundaries*, can never prove hurtful or dangerous, there being alwayes a juſt diſtinction to be made between thoſe who deſire only to ſerve God, and ſuch who pretend that, to become injurious to them. And thus we have ſeen, that not only Religion but Reaſon, not only Duty but Intereſt, do invocate Princes and States in this particular: To whom it may fitly be ſaid in the words of the Pſalmiſt, *Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Kings; and be inſtructed, O ye Judges of the Earth.*

FINIS.

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